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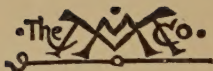
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**THE SCRIPTURES  
IN THE MAKING**



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# THE SCRIPTURES IN THE MAKING

BY

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MICHIGAN STATE NORMAL COLLEGE

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DEDICATED  
TO  
MY NIECE  
ADELINE  
AND TO  
THE MANY STUDENTS  
WHO HAVE TAKEN THE COURSE  
IN  
REGULAR COLLEGE WORK  
AND IN  
EXTENSION CLASSES

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A. P.



## PREFACE →

This book is an outgrowth of the demand to know something of the history of the making of the Bible, the greatest book of all literature. It is based on a study and comparison of the decisions of the best authorities and greatest research students.

Its aim is to make teachers and pupils familiar with Bible history, because this knowledge naturally and inevitably gives them a deeper veneration for Bible truth and enables them to understand and answer all quibbling and caviling at the so-called discrepancies, variations, and contradictions in the Bible. As soon as they recognize that the growth of the Bible, the Book of Books, is like that of all literature, there is no difficulty about conflicting statements. Incidentally this study reveals the richness of the Bible in language, literary models, and rules of conduct.

The course is non-sectarian—for Catholic and Protestant, for Jew and Gentile alike—for it is an inquiry into the Bible as literature, not as theology. It is designed for use in colleges and normal schools, in schools of religious education, in adult Sunday School classes, and by students working for a public school credit in the Bible. The New Testament and perhaps the Old, too, may be used by classes in high schools. Many of the chapters both in the Old and

the New Testament lend themselves to dramatic representation, and thus the dead past may be made to take on color and life.

The book is unique in this respect—it unites in one volume four important phases in the history of the Bible: (1) The history of the making of the books of the whole Bible; (2) their crystallization into the canons of the Old and the New Testament; (3) a study of the use and history of a few of the best old manuscripts; and (4) a summary of the noted versions from the Septuagint down through the centuries to the great English versions and the modern-speech translations.

It is the hope and belief of the author, based on class work and observation, that the study of this book will strengthen the faith of the student and enable him to give a reason for his conviction that the Bible stands supreme to-day as a revelation of God and His truth.

A. P.



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**PART I**  
**OLD TESTAMENT**





# THE SCRIPTURES IN THE MAKING

## CHAPTER I

### THE EVOLUTION OF A BOOK

Sometimes the tourist going from Concord to Walden Pond stops at the foot of the hill, picks up a stone, large or small according to his choice, carries it to the top, and deposits it there on a heap of stones of all sizes. What does this act mean? This is what every one asks as he sees this pile of stones. The answer is simple. From this particular heap one may learn that such a man as Thoreau lived, that he had a certain philosophy of life which he sought to illustrate in a practical way, by living in a shanty built near the very site marked by these stones. The answers to questions called up by this cairn keep vividly before all who visit it Thoreau's principles of life and their worth. This modern practice well illustrates the old method of teaching and remembering events. Such a heap of stones or a stone pillar in very ancient times and among all peoples was the means used to mark where some event had occurred or to tell why that spot was to be remembered. From Genesis <sup>1</sup> we learn that

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxxi. 44-49.

Jacob and Laban set up a stone pillar to commemorate their covenant. "Jacob said unto his brethren, 'Gather stones'; and they took stones and made a heap. . . . And Laban said, 'This heap is a witness between me and thee this day.'" In Joshua<sup>2</sup> we read of the covenant God made with the children of Israel: "And Joshua took a great stone and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Jehovah, and Joshua said, 'Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us.'"

Cairns were necessary in ancient days because they were reminders of events of common interest; they were a source of information for following generations; and an evidence that the event narrated really happened. They were the first available means employed by the human race to keep alive their early history. In fact, they were the books recording the past; and, used as an object lesson, they taught later generations the experiences of the great men of their tribes and the principal events in tribal history, as well as the motives and aims of their fathers. The stories suggested by these memorials were told and retold and came down in their folk-history by way of oral tradition. In Deuteronomy, for example, we may discover the Jewish method of teaching. In regard to the statutes and judgments of the law, the injunction is, "Make them known unto thy children and thy children's children";<sup>3</sup> again, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children";<sup>4</sup> and once more, "And ye shall teach them your children, talking of them when thou sittest in

<sup>2</sup> Josh. xxiv. 24-27.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. iv. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Deut., vi. 7.

thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou riseth up.”<sup>5</sup> At first the whole training of all ancient peoples was oral and their knowledge of the past depended in the main on oral tradition. Probably writing was practiced much earlier than we used to suppose, but for ages writing was the exception, not the rule, for the people had little time or inclination for it; perhaps they had not learned how to express ideas in picture writing, and even for centuries after written records were made they had no phonetic alphabet. But, like ourselves, they learned by experience, and eventually, instead of piling up heaps of stones as memorials, took advantage of what they found about them. Sometimes, in addition to oral tradition, they cut pictorial records on clay tablets or on stones. Thus by the use of these rude pictures which we call by the general term hieroglyphics, part of the history of the race was handed down. During the past seventy-five years some of these records written in the Babylonian cuneiform or the Egyptian hieroglyphics have been discovered in excavating long-buried cities. From their translation we learn, for instance, of legal decisions, finally cut into stone, as a great code of laws. The code of Hammurabi, found in this century but written about B. C. 2150-2000, as well as the Nippur Code written several hundred years earlier, are both excellent illustrations of preserving oral tradition by inscribing it on durable material.

However, both before and after these codes were

<sup>5</sup> Deut. xi. 19.

written, the human race relied chiefly on oral tradition for its history. The use of clay tablets or stone pillars insured preservation of the literature. But stone books were heavy and cumbersome and men learned to use the skin of animals or other materials on which to draw pictures. These records we call pictographs—another form of picture writing. Hundreds of years after, when men had acquired an alphabet and had learned to use papyrus, they wrote their literature on long strips of this material, which they formed into rolls. Much later still they bound their manuscripts into books like our own. But it was not till about the middle of the fifteenth century A. D. that the printing press was invented, enabling men to print and preserve many copies of the same book.

Have you seen that series of mural paintings in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., which illustrate the evolution of a book and show the progress that men have made in recording things important to them? These paintings represent, in fact, the universal experience of the race in the evolution of all kinds of literature. The first shows the cairn, the second illustrates oral tradition; then follow representations of the hieroglyphic, the pictograph, the manuscript, and finally the culmination of the whole, the printing press. Nothing could better teach how literature has grown and has been preserved. They illustrate, too, that emphasis must be placed on oral tradition as a means of preserving the history of the different races. We can imagine what kind of stories



these men, fathers of the tribe, told ages and ages ago as they talked to the old and the young. There were stories telling where the race came from and their idea of the Creator; stories about their struggle to maintain themselves and about their great heroes who had again and again delivered them from their enemies. There were songs of all kinds, especially war songs, celebrating their triumph over enemies, and songs of praise and thanksgiving for their deliverance. There were legends of how they came into the land, of their experiences with people living near the homes in which they had once lived; tales of how they finally settled in this particular place, and theories of their origin and of the power above them. Having grown older the race, like children to-day, would wake finally to the question, "How did I get here and where did I come from?" Then, with the traditions back of them, they formulated a story as satisfactory as their childish minds could conceive.

Their ideas would be crude, particularly those concerning the Creator, for all peoples, modern as well as ancient, conceive of God in terms of their own development. Children generally visualize God as a man; so these early children of the human race thought of God as like themselves, having all their appetites, hates, and desires and manifesting these as they themselves would do. They pictured God, then, as a superman—powerful, swift to anger if disobeyed, and terrible in his vengeance. This early conception of God as a man is called anthropomorphic.

These conjectures about all the problems of life, told

and retold, and modified by additions and by the lapse of time, would finally harden into theories.

In more modern times, even as late as the beginning of English literature, the same process is illustrated. The Arthurian cycle furnishes an excellent example. These legends which center about this wonderful King Arthur were told over and over again by those who loved the ideal Arthur. For hundreds of years these stories lived in oral tradition and, after having spread over England, were carried into northern France and added to there; then, brought back to England, they were retold, with additions and modifications, and finally were crystallized by writing, making one of our English classics—*Morte d'Arthur*. These legends began in oral tradition, were preserved by this method, and were finally committed to writing. After the invention of the printing press, they became part of our glorious literary inheritance. To be sure, the date of their origin is unknown; neither can accurate dates of their development be given. For, since literature is life, and life is a gradual and oftentimes unconscious growth, it would be impossible to give dates registering its beginning or its progress.

As the lack of accurate dates in great cycles of stories does not trouble the student of English literature, he should not bewail the fact that authoritative dates cannot be given to ancient historical or Biblical events. If dates are uncertain in the Arthurian stories of the Christian era, we cannot expect to find exact dates of happenings said to have occurred centuries before the advent of Christ, unless they are confirmed

by the cuneiform tablets or contemporary history. We know this much with certainty—that the literature of ancient peoples, representing their life, began in oral stories, songs, law codes, and history, and was transmitted from generation to generation orally, finally taking fixed form in writing. It is the fact recorded, not its date, that is vital.

Besides the tales of King Arthur, you recall, doubtless, other poems like *Beowulf* or the *Iliad*, whose growth was similar to the Arthurian cycle. Not only stories grew up in this way but all kinds of literature—even a law code, which is as formal as any kind of writing. A law code taken from English history illustrates the process. In his great desire to benefit the English people, King Alfred compiled the book of Doms. His method was to select from legal judgments made in the past and at first preserved orally, such decisions as he deemed best for the welfare of his country. He began the book with a very free translation of the Decalogue and other laws of Moses; then to these he added laws gathered from all English sources, choosing those judged best by himself and by the Council of his Witan. *The Doms* is mainly a compilation; for King Alfred modestly put in very little original subject matter. Yet the book of the Doms is known as the laws of King Alfred.

From such study and comparison of different forms of ancient literature, we may conclude that their history illustrates a process in literature—universal in respect to its origin, its growth, and its preservation,

as well as in the impossibility of giving exact dates to the origin and different stages of growth.

Since, then, knowledge in early times was gained and preserved by oral tradition, it is interesting and important to notice how oral tradition is modified. The story always depends on the point of view of the narrator, but there are many things to be considered concerning this point of view. We may illustrate this by the account of a battle in the World War. The stories of a German, a Frenchman, or an American would differ greatly, even though each one meant to tell the truth. The descriptions would vary according to the race and the knowledge of the teller and the source of that knowledge. Two of us see a street fight. How different may be the story told by each because of his point of view, attention, and understanding of the matter. No two would give identical versions. If the narrators are truthful, testimony regarding the same event even must vary in details. If witnesses in a legal trial agree exactly their testimony is worse than useless, is in fact harmful to their own case, because the jury unanimously decides that the witnesses have been instructed beforehand. This conclusion proves that every one acknowledges that a story will vary according to the narrator.

Another fact, too, that modifies the story to-day as well as in the past, is the locality in which the tradition is preserved. Where are the victories of a college team told with more detail and more exaltation of the college heroes than in the home of their Alma Mater? Bible stories illustrate the same point. For example,

those that grew up at Bethel and were preserved there emphasize especially the patriarch Jacob, because it was here that he had his wonderful dream of the ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, and afterward marked the spot by a stone pillar in remembrance of his vow.<sup>6</sup> Traditions preserved at Hebron, the home of Abraham, would center about him as a hero. These examples show the effect of environment upon the point of view.

Human nature is always the same—to-day, yesterday, and forever. Early story-tellers of the human race, even though trying to tell the truth, would be affected by all these influences and unwittingly would color their stories in accordance with them. It would be unreasonable to expect these early narrators to tell stories about the same event, without discrepancies, repetitions, and even contradictions. We must remember that their accounts would vary according to the source from which they obtained the material, their knowledge of the story, which might have been limited, and their point of view, which would be personal, affected by all the influences enumerated. Naturally, truthful narratives would show these variations.

Reviewing briefly, we repeat (1) that all literature began in oral tradition and was preserved by it until fixed in writing; (2) that the point of view of the narrator varies according to his race, his state of civilization, his knowledge of the story and its source, his ability to see the whole from the related parts, the kind and number of people his race has come into

<sup>6</sup> Gen. xxviii. 18.



contact with, and the time which has elapsed between the occurrence of the event and the age of the world in which he himself lived. This process of development is that of the evolution of a book.

The Bible is the Book of all Books, God's message to mankind, given to men taught of Him. That the evolution of the Bible is like that of other books is the conclusion reached by scholarly and deeply reverent men, who have devoted themselves to an exhaustive and faithful study of its truth. Consequently, their faith is not shaken by variations or even contradictions. In fact, it is strengthened because they know the history of the making of the Bible. This knowledge enables them to see God's truth more clearly and, best of all, to give others a good reason for their conviction of its truth.

## CHAPTER II

### HOW THE BIBLE GREW: ILLUSTRATIONS: THE CREATION AND THE FLOOD

Since the growth of the Bible is the same as that of other books, it follows that it is neither necessary nor wise to hush up a reader when he says, "The Bible contradicts itself, for in one place it reads that the flood continued forty days; in another, one hundred and fifty days." We must frankly admit that contradiction, yet this truthful admission is in direct contrast to the old method of teaching Bible truth. Formerly children were silenced by a "Keep still; it is in the Bible and so must be true." Children obeyed, but were not convinced and formulated the idea that "The Bible is different from other books; it may contradict itself and not lie"—a conclusion which they did not believe. Perhaps the statement that the young to-day are turning away from the Bible in scorn is one result of this ignorant and false method. Trained in the public school to do their work in secular books accurately and logically, they have no respect for a book which cannot be treated in the same way. Why should not the Bible be taught and studied as other books are? It will stand the test. As soon as pupils understand that the Bible has grown in the same manner as any book, they will readily see that the variations,

discrepancies, even contradictions found, do not cast doubt on Bible records.

We may illustrate this by an oral tradition which was finally reduced to writing. Doubtless some of the great questions in the history of all races would be these: How came this world into existence? How was I created? How did men come here? No doubt the Jews, like other races, had often speculated on these questions, told what their wise men thought, recalled what they had heard from peoples with whom they had come in contact, perhaps repeated ideas current among the Babylonians before and at the time when Abraham was their close neighbor—those stories from earlier sources to which literary inheritance both Abraham and the Babylonians were heirs. Certainly the Babylonian account which we get from the cuneiform tablets is very similar to the Biblical story recorded by the Jews in the first two chapters of Genesis. Turning to these chapters, we notice that there are a number of differences, even contradictions. One of two things is true: either these are discrepancies or there are two different accounts of the Creation. Perhaps the latter supposition explains the differences which may have troubled careful readers. Many have read carelessly, however, and have said, irreverently, "Well, there's your Bible for you!" As one high school pupil said to his mother, "See how it contradicts itself? How can you expect us to respect it?" If we read these stories carefully and note how they agree and disagree, can a reasonable explanation of their differences be given? First, were both written by



the same person? If so, they should agree in all essentials. We have admitted that two people telling the same story, even though they are truthful, will never give accounts identical in details. There will be differences in two respects: namely, in the way they tell it or the style—which depends upon the person himself—and in the subject matter.

Remembering these things, we study Genesis i.-ii. 4 and Genesis ii.-iv. 25. What are the common features or likenesses? First, they are both creation stories—stories of the creation of the world and all therein, with man as the climax. Second, they both begin with a scene of waste and desolation—primeval chaos. Third, in both of these stories only one God is represented. In this last respect they are different from most of the other great creation stories of ancient peoples, a fact which shows that the Jews had a clearer vision of God than other people; and, knowing Him better, could speak more clearly, being inspired, as we sometimes say.

But what troubles most people are the differences in these two accounts. Looking at the content of the story in Genesis i., we find that the order of the creation is very different from that recorded in Genesis ii. We read: on the first day, light and day and night were created; on the second day, the firmament; on the third, the earth and the seas and vegetation; on the fourth, the sun, moon, and stars; on the fifth, living creatures of the water and the air; on the sixth, land animals and mankind; on the seventh, God rested and it became the Sabbath Day. In Genesis ii., it is re-

corded that man was created first, and that he was placed in a garden where there were trees of all kinds, gold and precious stones, and four rivers. God put man in the garden to dress and keep it and to have dominion over the animals just created. Finally, woman was created. As a second difference, we note the creation of woman (Genesis i. 27). According to this account, she was made by the same creative act as man and God breathed into her the breath of life. He created them both in the image of God—"Male and female, created He them." According to Genesis ii. 21-23, woman was an afterthought. She was created as a companion to man. She was made from the rib which the Lord God took from man and we are not told that God breathed into her the breath of life nor that she was made in the image of God. In the third place, in Genesis i. God is represented as spiritual; in Genesis ii. He is spoken of as a man or as anthropomorphic. Again, in Genesis i. the creation is represented as cosmic—the universe, the earth, the heavens, the planets, and all else are created; according to Genesis ii. the creation was local. There was a garden with streams flowing through it and Adam and Eve were in the garden. God talked to Adam as a man—but as a superman.

Another difference which we cannot get from the reading of the two chapters in some versions, but which we know about from the study of the original manuscripts, is that in Genesis i. whenever the writer speaks about the Creator he calls Him Elohim. In Genesis ii. the writer calls the Creator Jahweh.

Now these points enumerated are differences in subject matter, the first three of which any one will notice readily. Let us see whether we can discover any other differences. First, as we read Genesis i., we notice that the style is formal and set, systematic in its arrangement, orderly, methodical, and continuous. There are six days, the first, second, third, and so to the seventh. Again, the writer uses formulas and repetitions like "The evening and the morning were the first day, and the evening and the morning were the second day, and the evening and the morning were the third day, etc." Again, "God saw that it was good" (v. 12); "And God saw that it was good" (v. 18). This manner of writing makes us think of a scholar, a priest, a lawyer, a man who has been trained to write in an orderly, logical way and use certain set terms. Turning to the other story in Genesis ii. we find that the author is vivid and graphic, has a lively, picturesque diction; in fact, that he is a story-teller, delighted with his garden, his streams, and his picture of Adam and Eve. There are no formal set terms or repetitions. The author tells the story for the sake of the story and we get his thrill as we read.

Style is said to be the man himself; and, as these two narratives differ widely in style, as well as in subject matter, some inference must be drawn. What may we safely conclude? That the Bible is not true? Experience and common sense tell us better. Rather two men must have written this story. One, the author of Genesis ii., is a story-teller, the kind of writer that came first in the history of the human

race. In development he himself is a child and speaks to a race as yet children. We can hear him rehearsing these stories at their ordinary meetings or at gatherings commemorating the memory of the patriarchs and the great events in the history of their race. The other man is different. He must have lived centuries after this first story-teller. He has the traditions of the race, too, but he has thought them over, put two and two together, formulated his conclusions, and stated them in a definite, systematic way. He must have been a man who came later in the history of the Jewish race. The story-teller of Genesis ii., like a child, looks at God in terms of his own mind; he conceives of God as a man, but as a superman. The author of Genesis i. looks upon God as spiritual. This conception marks a great step taken in the history of the Jewish race, requiring centuries of thought and of sifting of thought.

The scientific truth about these stories is, as scholars now know, that Genesis i. and ii. were written by two different men. They come from what we call two documents: Genesis i. is from the priestly-legal document, symbol P, because we think it was written by a priest during the last days of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, about B. C. 450. Genesis ii. is taken from the primitive document called J, because in it God is called Jahweh. Scholars give its date about B. C. 850 or 900, that is, about four centuries before the priestly-legal document. Considering these points, we see at once that these so-called contradictions and discrepancies are easily accounted for in a logical way. The J

writer simply told the story, having back of him all of the oral traditions of his race and probably some written material later lost. The writer of the document P had back of him not only the oral traditions but three documents written before his and in addition all of the history of the race from the time of the storyteller. The race was older; he thought not as a child but as a man. Being a priest and lawyer, he mulled over the stories and tried to account in a systematic, orderly, logical way for the facts of creation. Then he began with the creation of the world and narrowed it to that of the Jewish race. He came late enough in the history of the race life to feel the absurdity of thinking of God as a man and so conceived of him as spiritual.

In the same manner we may study the Biblical story of the Deluge. These different accounts come from different documents, and therefore we do not try to explain away the fact that in one account the flood lasted for forty days, and in another, one hundred fifty days; because we know that two different men, writing at different times in the history of the race, looking at the matter from different points of view, and perhaps having different sources of information, would be sure to make different statements.

Let us turn to the story of the Deluge given in Genesis vi.-ix. It is not easy to compare these two accounts because some verses in each of the chapters are taken from the primitive document J and others from the priestly-legal document P. There are repeti-



tions as well as contradictions. The fact is that the last compiler of the Pentateuch evidently chose some statements concerning the same points from each document, probably repeating some facts for emphasis or explanation. To illustrate, compare Genesis vi. 5-8 with the following verses 9-13, the first being from the document J, the second from the document P. They record the same facts, but the order in which the facts are given is different. In each document the world was said to be corrupt, Noah alone was righteous, therefore God purposed to destroy mankind. Among the differences of detail given in these chapters, we find that according to the J document Jahweh orders two of each kind of unclean animal and seven of each kind of clean taken into the ark. In the document P, two of each kind of living creature are taken into the ark. In the J document the rain is said to have lasted for forty days and was merely a violent rainstorm; in the P document it is recorded that the waters prevailed for one hundred fifty days, and the storm was a great convulsion of the elements. In the J document, the flood ceased to increase at the end of forty days; in the P document, at the end of one hundred fifty days the flood ceased to increase and the ark rested on Mount Ararat. According to the J writer, Noah sent out a raven, which returned. Then he waited seven days and sent out a dove, which came back, the return showing that the earth was still covered with water. After another seven days he sent out the dove again and she came back with an olive leaf. He waited another seven days and sent out an-

other dove; she did not return and Noah concluded that the earth was dry.

On the other hand, the P writer omits these details and simply tells that the waters decreased until the tops of the mountains could be seen, and on the first day of the first month of the next year the water had disappeared. It is the priestly writer, however, who makes the rainbow the pledge of God's covenant not again to destroy mankind by a flood. We should expect the story-teller to speak of the beautiful rainbow, but it is the priestly writer who does so. Why should he? Because he always has in mind God's covenant with the Jews, therefore he emphasizes the rainbow as a sign of God's covenant never again to destroy the earth with a flood.

These illustrations are sufficient, perhaps, to prove that when we study the Bible in a scientific way we are more and more impressed with its truth and logic.

#### SUMMARY

We find in Genesis two Hebrew accounts of each of the two great events, the Creation and the Deluge. They were written by two different men and therefore differ both in style and content of thought, because of the time in the history of the race at which they were written, because of the writer himself, his object in writing, and his source of material.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CANON OF THE LAW: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

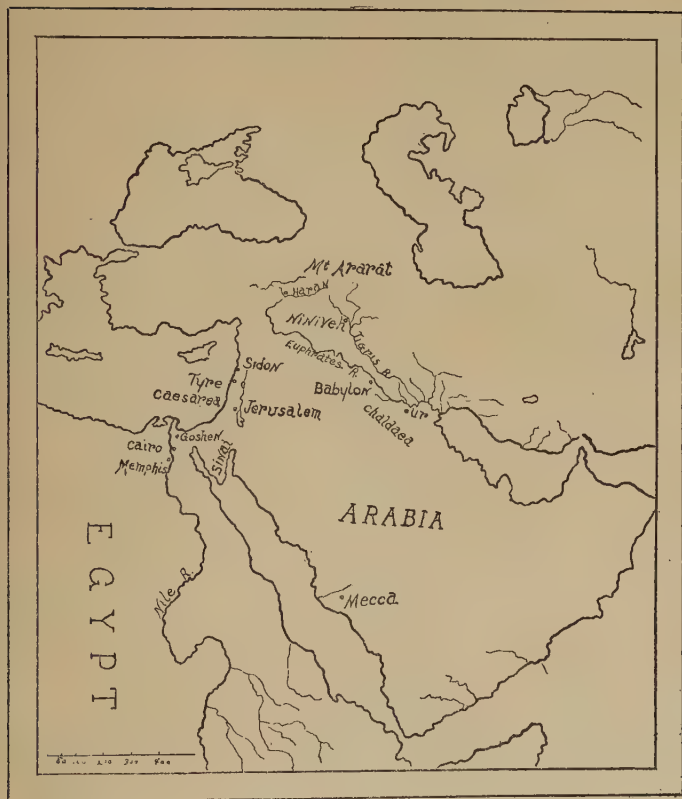
In the canon of the Old Testament, the first group of five books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—is called the Pentateuch, or the book of the Law. They are also known as the books of Moses or as the Torah. The latter word means oral direction; and gradually these oral directions came to mean oral decisions, finally put into writing as a code of law. The book of Joshua, although generally classed with the prophetic histories, forms a sequel to the early history of the Jewish nation, and is often considered with the five books, the six together being called the Hexateuch. These books relate the history of the Jews from the call of Abraham to their settlement in Canaan.

In order to understand the development of the Law, a knowledge of the sources of material used is necessary; therefore the principal points in Jewish history must be reviewed.

From the Bible we find the father of the Jewish race to be Abraham, whom God called, as it is said, out of Ur of the Chaldees, saying, "I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee, and make thy name



## A BIT OF THE ANCIENT WORLD





great; and be thou a blessing.”<sup>1</sup> So Abraham left the land of his forefathers. Present explorations seem to justify the old belief that Ur of the Chaldees was near the Euphrates River, just a little to the southeast of the ancient city of Babylon. Thus Abraham and his ancestors had the same background as the Babylonians and kindred people, and, consequently, the same storehouse of literary material. This may be one reason why the Babylonian story of the Creation, written on the cuneiform tablets, is so similar to the Hebrew account. This likeness is also noticeable in the two accounts of the Flood, Hebrew and Babylonian.

It is possible that Abraham had heard from his father and the elders of his people the old stories current round about the Euphrates River, concerning the creation of man and of the world. As the father of a new nation, he carried these in his memory and they would be told and retold to the Jews for centuries before they were committed to writing. Then, probably, in the clearer light of a better knowledge of God, the Jews later evolved an account far above any other; for no other creation story reaches the simple dignity of its thought and its high conception of God. It may be, too, that the Babylonians and Abraham's ancestors had derived their accounts from older narratives, known to both through oral traditions. Be that as it may, at God's call Abraham went forth to found a new nation, traveled to the north and west with Sarah his wife, had the many experiences recorded in the Bible, and finally came to

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xii. 1, 2.

Shechem and Bethel, at last making his home at Hebron.

Abraham, then, is regarded as the father of the Jewish nation; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are known as the Jewish patriarchs. These three men are important in the history of the Jews—Abraham whom God called; Isaac, the son of promise; and Jacob, the father of twelve children, the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The next step is the transition made through Joseph from near Bethel in Canaan to Egypt. We all remember the story of Joseph—sold by his jealous brethren, brought to Egypt as a slave, but by his wisdom and integrity making himself so indispensable to the Pharaoh of Egypt that he became second in power to this ruler. We recall, too, that years later during a famine in Canaan Jacob sent his sons into Egypt to buy corn. Thus Joseph again met his brethren who years before had treated him so vilely. He knew them at once, but they did not recognize in the chief officer of Egypt the younger brother, their father's favorite. After Joseph had made himself known to them, he sent for his father to come into the land of Egypt and make it his home. Pharaoh granted them the territory of Goshen in northeastern Egypt, and here they lived, favored by the Egyptians as long as Joseph was remembered. After some time, however, another ruler arose that knew not Joseph;<sup>2</sup> and the children of Israel were made slaves and oppressed by the Egyptians. They were compelled to make bricks

<sup>2</sup> Ex. i. 8.

without straw and forced even to cast their first-born into the river Nile. The beautiful story of Moses and the princess of Egypt belongs here. Moses was adopted by her, grew up at the Egyptian court, and was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

At forty years of age Moses fled to the desert of Midian and lived there another forty years before God called him to go and deliver the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. Because of the ten plagues and other calamities visited upon the Egyptians, Pharaoh reluctantly consented to let the Israelites go after they had been in Egypt between three or four hundred years. Moses, then, may be called the deliverer, the leader, and the lawgiver of the Jews. In Biblical history their going out from Egypt is known as the Exodus.

Following Moses, the next great figure is Joshua, who led Israel into the Promised Land. Invading Palestine from time to time, and gradually gaining a foothold there, as we learn from the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, these children of Israel after the death of Joshua lived nearly two hundred years under judges. These judges were not exactly what we should call judges, although, like kings, they sometimes gave legal decisions in disputed cases. They were really great heroes of the different tribes, who rose in time of oppression, gained victories over the tribal enemies, and delivered their special tribe from the Philistines. They were, then, really champions—heroes of some special section who carried on the hard fight against the original inhabitants of Canaan. The record of

their deeds is given mainly in Judges. Their history is very fascinating; and picturesque incidents from it enrich the store of literary material. We shall name merely a few of these famous judges who ruled Israel for so long.

One of the first of these was the wonderful woman Deborah, who led her tribe to battle and with the aid of King Barak routed their oppressors. Another champion, Samson, the strongest man according to the old Bible primer, arrests one's attention. Music and poetry have immortalized him in the celebrated opera "Samson and Delilah" and the great poem "Samson Agonistes." This hero, shorn of his strength and blinded, was kept in prison grinding the mill for his conquerors. After he had recovered his strength, he was brought to the heathen temple to make sport for his enemies. Grasping the great pillars of the temple, he pulled it down upon himself and the assembled crowd, saying, "Let me die with the Philistines."<sup>3</sup> We remember another of these judges in connection with a story that touched the hearts of the children of Israel, even as it does ours. Jephthah made a vow that, should he be successful in his fight against the tribal enemies, he would offer as a sacrifice whoever first met him on his return home. His young daughter was the first to greet her father, and our sympathy is aroused by his great grief and her willing submission. To show how closely the past is linked up with the present, we mention another great champion, Gideon, whose slogan was by "the sword of the

<sup>3</sup> Jud. xvi. 30.

Lord and Gideon." To-day the Gideonites, a society of traveling men, named for this old-time hero, very appropriately place Bibles in the rooms of the hotels throughout Canada and the United States. His wonderful story is given in Judges.<sup>4</sup>

Including the major and minor judges, there were about twenty during this period of Jewish history. Finally we come to the man Eli, a priest and a judge. Righteous himself, he failed to restrain his bad sons and was brought to his death by the news of their death and the capture of the ark. After this, according to tradition, Israel came to the prophet and judge, Samuel, asking to have a king as the heathen natives had. Samuel, consulting with the Lord, was loath to grant their request but finally yielded, and anointed Saul as king of the Jews. He was their first king and one of the three great kings that mark Jewish history. During his whole reign, Saul kept up a constant warfare with the Philistines. At last he and his son Jonathan fell in Mount Gilboa <sup>5</sup> after fighting valiantly but unsuccessfully against the enemies of Israel. But, notwithstanding all his efforts, at Saul's death the twelve tribes, though gradually coming together, were not yet a united kingdom. Saul is said to have reigned from B. C. 1050-1010, a period of forty years spent in fighting to make the twelve tribes one kingdom.

While Saul was yet alive, according to tradition, Samuel had reproved him and threatened that the kingdom should be taken from him because of his

<sup>4</sup>Jud. vi, vii.

<sup>5</sup>II Sam. i. 1-27.



disobedience to Jehovah. Saul, however, paid little attention to the exhortation and warning and continued in his course; so Samuel anointed the shepherd lad, David, as king of Israel. He also reigned forty years, from B. C. 1010-970. David was one of the greatest warriors of the ancient world—a warrior king and hero. A great organizer as well as a martial leader, he made the twelve tribes one nation. At his death he left Israel, formerly twelve tribes with different aims and purposes, a unified kingdom—strong and powerful.

The last in this group of the three great kings of Israel was Solomon, who reigned from B. C. 970-937. Although we know the proverbs ascribed to Solomon, his famous decisions, and the number of his wives, as a king he is chiefly remembered as a great builder, a great industrial ruler. During his long peaceful reign, he built for united Israel magnificent buildings, beautified and enlarged Jerusalem itself, built the Temple, and the wonderful palaces for centuries the admiration of the world. But, in order to carry on this great building scheme, Solomon had to tax the people very heavily indeed, so heavily that they, as we do at present, groaned at the heavy load and resented it. At Solomon's death, therefore, all the congregation of Israel came to Shechem to his son, Rehoboam, telling him they would serve him as they had served his father, Solomon, providing he would lessen their taxes and relieve their heavy burdens. Rehoboam took time to consider this and, following the advice of the young men about him, replied in



substance, 'My father taxed you heavily: I shall tax you still more heavily'—"My little finger is thicker than my father's loins."<sup>6</sup> This decision of Rehoboam's caused a revolt of the ten tribes of Israel. They became the Northern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Israel, with their capital at Samaria. The two tribes, called the Southern Kingdom, or Kingdom of Judah, had as their chief city Jerusalem, containing the magnificent palaces and wonderful Temple of Solomon. This split of Israel into two kingdoms is known as the Division of the Kingdom, which took place B. C. 937.

This historical background shows the children of Israel as a primitive agricultural people, finally invading Canaan and, after years of fighting, gaining a foothold there.

Archeological research adds to this picture in several ways; for instance, in the inferences to be drawn from the discovery of the code of Hammurabi; in the similarity of the Bible records of the Creation and the Flood to those of the Babylonians, written on the cuneiform tablets and dug up in excavating the ruins of Nineveh; and in the knowledge gained from the Tel-el-Amarna tablets of the manner in which the Jews entered Canaan.

With these historical facts before us, we can judge from what sources the material for the Hexateuch was drawn. We have already seen that in Hebrew literature, as in all literatures, knowledge was transmitted in two ways—by oral tradition and by writing.

<sup>6</sup>I Kings xii. 10.

Oral tradition took different forms to express the chief interests of the people. We have observed that some of the earliest forms were songs of all kinds; codes of laws, which the people had formulated to meet emergencies; ancient folklore; historical stories about the great deeds of the people, and about their patriarchs; popular legends of the Creation, the Temptation, the Fall, the Deluge, and other great events, like the Exodus from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea; tales of the wonderful, heroic adventures of the Judges, and everything else naturally in the early literature of any people. For the most part this literature would be oral.

At present we have no means of proving when these oral records were put into writing, because hieroglyphic writing among ancient people is so old that its origin is lost. Scholars have decided, however, that it must have been at least centuries earlier than the code of Hammurabi or even before the earlier Nippur code. Records found on tiles, bricks, and stones argue the fact that writing was known at a very early date. Cuneiform inscriptions have been found, one of which scholars think may be the original of the puzzling chapter, Genesis xiv. The Amraphel of the first verse has been tentatively identified with the great Hammurabi, making him a contemporary of Abraham. Evidently writing was practiced at this time, as illustrated by the famous code. In fact, to anticipate a little, writing must have been known and used widely in the time of the monarchy, for in the Bible scribes<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> I Kings iv. 3.

are mentioned as being well known; and an official recorder<sup>8</sup> is spoken of as if his office were as well known and as well recognized as that of the captain of the host. These official recorders very likely made notes of historical events, and these were used by later historians.

Long before the monarchy, no doubt, writing was employed to record great events. There doubtless were, too, written records in part of the oral prophecies of the early prophets, like Elijah. For instance, there is no book in the Bible called Elijah; yet in the book of Kings<sup>9</sup> we read his denunciations of the wicked King Ahab and his prophecy against him and the people of Israel. Long before the time of the kings, Moses lived and may have been able to write, since he came several centuries after the Hammurabi code was written and was reputed trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians, one of the most civilized races of antiquity. We know nothing as yet of this earlier writing among the Jews except as a source for the documents written later. Naturally, however, since the art of writing was known, some one who knew how to express himself in writing might record a law which he thought vital, or a narrative in which he had great interest, or a story, sung or told. Long before we know anything about writing among the Jews, then, there may have been fragments written and perhaps lost before we get to formal writing.

Some of the oldest literature of the world is incorporated in the books of the Old Testament.

<sup>8</sup> II Sam. viii. 16.

<sup>9</sup> I Kings xviii.-xix.

Throughout the Pentateuch we have examples of literature preserved orally at first, no doubt, then perhaps written, and afterward incorporated into these books. A few examples will illustrate. There are the songs—the wonderful one ascribed to Moses<sup>10</sup> and the children of Israel after their deliverance from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea while Miriam and the women sang antiphonally. Later, there is the song of Deborah, the champion of the tribes of Israel, beginning

Because the leaders took the lead in Israel,  
because the people freely volunteered,  
bless ye Jahweh!

Hear O ye kings; ye princes give ear!

I will sing to Jahweh,

I will sing praise to Jahweh, the God of Israel.<sup>11</sup>

Then follows the description of the battle and the ignominious death of Sisera at the hand of a woman, Jael. The poem concludes with the anxiety of the mother of Sisera and her maidens about the fate of the battle and her son. This poem is valuable not only for its literary excellence but also because of the vivid picture it gives of the background of the times. These songs and others, whether oral or written, have been preserved by having been transferred to the narrative portions of the Bible.

Another great source for the Pentateuch was the writings of Moses and the laws of Moses, referred to

<sup>10</sup> Ex. xv. 1-18.

<sup>11</sup> J. A. Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 6.

again and again. Many of these references are in Exodus and Deuteronomy. They prove that there was a great store of material which existed in oral tradition and also in writing, now lost to us, from which these first writers of the Old Testament drew. Moses doubtless did write many of the so-called Mosaic writings; it may be literally with his own hand, as recorded.

In Exodus <sup>12</sup> we read the beginning and growth of their laws. It is there reported that Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, though a heathen, gave very practical advice to his Hebrew son-in-law. The people, coming to Moses with all their trivial disputes, were in danger of "wearing away" not only themselves but Moses. Acting upon the advice of Jethro, Moses appointed subordinate judges to hear and decide the minor cases, referring the great matters to himself as a court of last appeal. The story shows plainly not only how law codes have grown up but why they take their name from a great lawgiver. All decisions rendered by these subordinate judges were subject to an appeal to Moses and could be, therefore, and were very properly called the laws of Moses, or the Mosaic code.

But, according to the Bible, Moses was not only the lawgiver of the Jews but a historian as well. In the narrative books he is spoken of as writing the account of certain events. A few illustrations will make this clear. It is recorded that after Amalek was conquered the Lord told Moses to "write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. . . ." <sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Ex. xviii. 13-26.

<sup>13</sup> Ex. xvii. 14.



Again, "And Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah"; <sup>14</sup> and later in the same chapter we read, "And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people." The author of Deuteronomy asserts that Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the children of Israel . . . "And it came to pass when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book. . . ." <sup>15</sup> Other references of like tenor showing why the Jews believed Moses wrote these records might be given. The so-called Mosaic writings, therefore, make a source of material.

As the documents were not written till long after the material existed both in oral tradition and in writing, there is another source which is referred to very often in the later history of the Jews, particularly during the monarchy. This source is the lost books, as we call them. Long before the Old Testament was complete, perhaps even before the last document was written, these books were known and perhaps some of them lost. How do we know then that there were such books? How should we know that there had been such a man as Shakespeare, supposing all his works to be blotted out? Could not scholars almost reconstruct the different plays from quotations, allusions, and references made to them in general literature? In the Bible we find references to books of which, as books, nothing is now known. They are even named as a source from which certain material had been taken. Let us look up a few of these refer-

<sup>14</sup> Ex. xxiv. 4,7.

<sup>15</sup> Deut. xxxi. 24-26.

ences as illustrations. We read, "Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of Jehovah. . . ." <sup>16</sup> This book is evidently cited as well known. Again we read, "Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" <sup>17</sup> Another very well-known reference to this latter book is given in Samuel, <sup>18</sup> in David's lament over the deaths of Saul and of Jonathan. The lament shows that the date was as early as David and after the death of Saul. Some of the other books given as references for historical facts or for recalling proverbs or psalms are alluded to as if they were authoritative and well-known books of the Jews. <sup>19</sup> I and II Chronicles were among the last books of the Old Testament written and contain many of these references indicated.

#### SUMMARY

The sources of the Pentateuch are oral and written material of all kinds; the Mosaic code and writings and the lost books. The documents themselves, as they fixed this material in writing, are the last and best records of important events. The last document, coming about four hundred years after the first, was really a last compilation and revision of the four.

<sup>16</sup> Num. xxi. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Josh. x. 12-13.

<sup>18</sup> II Sam. i. 18 ff.

<sup>19</sup> I Chron. xxix. 29; II Chron. ix. 29, xiii. 22, xii. 15, xx. 34, etc.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CANON OF THE LAW: THE DOCUMENTS

After noting the sources of material, both oral and written, we are ready for the Documents, compilations from many sources. There were four of these narratives, technically called the Documents. The Penta-teuch is really a history of the Jews combining the four documents and even in the same chapter making excerpts from the different ones, so that readers ignorant of the manner in which they were written find only repetitions and contradictions. The initiated know that these stories are from different authors, living at different periods in Jewish history and using the sources at their command. Each later compiler and reviser had more material to work with, and enlarged his work by additions from other documents. The method by which the historical books of the Old Testament were written is well illustrated by showing the process employed in compiling the book of Genesis. Two quotations from S. R. Driver make this clear.

The process by which, probably, the Book of Genesis assumed its present form may be represented approximately as follows: First, the two independent, but parallel narratives of the patri-



archal age, J and E, were combined into a whole by a compiler whose method of work, sometimes incorporating long sections of each intact (or nearly so), sometimes fusing the parallel accounts into a single narrative, has been sufficiently illustrated. The whole thus formed (J E) was afterward combined with the narrative P by a second compiler, who, adopting P as his framework, accommodated J E to it, omitting in either what was necessary in order to avoid needless repetition, and making slight redactional adjustments as the unity of his work required.<sup>1</sup>

Again in speaking of the historical books, Driver writes:

The historical books of the Old Testament form two series. . . . Though differing from each other materially in scope and manner of treatment, these two series are nevertheless both constructed upon a similar plan; no entire book in either consists of a single, original work; but older writings or sources have been combined by a compiler in such a manner that the points of juncture are often plainly discernible, and the sources are in consequence capable of being separated from one another.

A great deal of scientific research and study have been given to these documents and scholars are well agreed on which parts of the narrative books come from each. Of course, there are some clauses and phrases that are still in doubt; but in general it is known from which source the different parts of the

<sup>1</sup>S. R. Driver, *Introduction to Literature of the Old Testament*.

Pentateuch are taken. To lay the foundation for future research study as well as to get a working knowledge for the present, a few salient points concerning each document are presented.

The first of the four, in point of time, is called the primitive one or the J document. We remember that the story of Creation in the second chapter of Genesis came from this story-teller's document. The document J, that of the story-teller, is the earliest one known and was written about B. C. 850 or 900. A long time had elapsed between the Creation—ages and ages—and the first written document, knowledge of history, poetry, and all truth being preserved in the main by oral tradition.

The J writer belonged to the Southern Kingdom. Naturally we might surmise this because the Southern Kingdom at Jerusalem had the great Temple of Solomon and many priests and literary men in service in the Temple; and then, too, it was less disturbed by invasions than the Northern Kingdom and therefore had more time to devote to literature. The symbol of this document is J because God is called Jahweh. It is a history of the race not primarily to teach morals or the niceties of theology, but a graphic, vivid, picturesque story, such a one as we should expect from the oral traditions of the race. Like all great story-tellers since then, the J writer had the power of delineating life and character by a few strokes, never retarding his story by irrelevant particulars but making his reader see the scene. These stories show a frank interest in all of the old sanctuaries, sacred

trees, and high places—everything in which children would be interested.

In this first document God is represented as anthropomorphic, that is, as a man; the Jews are usually called Israelites; and the original inhabitants of Palestine, Canaanites. We find this document one of the sources of the Pentateuch, of the books Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, and perhaps even of part of Kings. Of course, there would be many versions of this story after it was once written. Certain points would be emphasized in certain places, others in other sections, and so we have what we should call later editions perhaps of this document marked J<sup>1</sup> or J<sup>2</sup>, which means revised once or twice or as many times as the exponent indicates.

The second great document is called the E document. This was written in the Northern Kingdom, about one hundred years later, or about B. C. 750. Its symbol is E because in this document God is called Elohim. This, too, is a wonderful story, a later story of the history of the children of Israel. It still has all the characteristics of the story-teller, only sometimes it tries to use a story to point a moral, showing that it is of later date in the history of the nation than the J document which simply tells the story for the story's sake. The E writer, too, begins to try to explain anything in the history of one of their great men that he sees might be criticized on moral grounds. For instance, in the story of Abraham and Sarah when, through fear, Abraham told the heathen king Sarah was his sister, not his wife, the J writer tells the story

simply, but the E writer tries to excuse Abraham's evident untruthfulness in the matter by adding that indeed Sarah, though his wife, was his half-sister as well.

In fact, the Elohist writer begins to preach rather than merely to tell the story. He represents the transition from the first document to the later period. Another point that illustrates this difference is the fact that he tries to get away from the idea that God is a man. He still thinks of him as such because he cannot conceive of anything else; but he does not frankly represent him as the J writer does, talking to Adam and walking with him in the garden in the cool of the day. He shows his changing point of view by having God communicate with man by means of visions and dreams rather than directly. It is very interesting to note the growth of the idea of God from the story-teller's conception to the priestly-legal conception of a spiritual God in the last document P. This E document, like the J, is also found in the Pentateuch and in the other historical books. It probably once existed as a small book in the form of a roll.

After the writing of the E document, naturally men, having both the J and E, would make a composite of the two, and such a composite document is called the J E document—a very important one, often called the prophetic document.

The third document is in some respects one of the most interesting of all because it shows that, even after the Jews began to write and had the Temple in

which to preserve their writings, these were sometimes lost. The story of the finding of the D document is given in Kings.<sup>2</sup> It shows that even after there was space in the Temple for books documents could be lost; for while they were making repairs in the Temple, they found a copy of what was called the Law of the Lord which had been lost for about forty years. Finally it was brought before King Josiah and read to him. When he found how far the people had departed from what was required by the Law of the Lord he himself repented bitterly and made the people gather together to listen to this Law of the Lord, calling on them to repent. This document was discovered in B. C. 621 and was probably written some years earlier, perhaps forty years before, in B. C. 661. The symbol is D, and it forms the core of the book of Deuteronomy, not the whole book as we have it now. It, too, is a separate work like the J and the E documents, but differs in this respect. It devotes little time to the story as a narrative, but tells it in order to incite the children of Israel to obedience. The writer reviews what Jehovah has done for them in the past—how he had directed Abraham from the beginning and guided the patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob, and delivered the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, guided them under the judges, and finally given them great kings. The D writer, then, emphasizes the point that, in view of all Jehovah had done for them, they should render Him obedience and loyalty. Therefore, to-day we think this narrative somewhat like a

<sup>2</sup> II Kings xxii. 8-23.



sermon, because the story is given not primarily for the sake of the story, but for the sake of exhortation to obedience and loyalty. Its interest is narrative, to be sure, but on the whole moral.

The main purpose of the D author is reforming the nation. He sees the tendency of the children of Israel to idolatry as well as to other acts of disobedience to Jehovah. Therefore, he begins with the repetition of the Decalogue and uses it as his text through several chapters. He gives codes of laws, not for the sake of the laws, but as a means of awakening the children of Israel to a moral conviction of their wickedness and thus lead to a reform in national life. "This law" or "this book of the law," as it is often called, was used by the prophets later to awaken the nation to their sins and to institute a reform by putting away idolatry and by serving Jehovah as the one spiritual God.

From the study of D, we find as a source some laws already given in J E but nothing from the P document. The conclusion is that D was written after the composite J E but before P was united with this narrative. Another remarkable fact is that the codes of D and P are different in detail, therefore show two different stages in the growth of the nation's life and history. Altogether D is unique among the documents.

The last great document or the fourth, we call the priestly-legal document. Its symbol is P because a priest was its author. Its date is before the return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem, having been written while they were in exile there. In round numbers we might say it was written about B. C. 460, at

least four hundred years later than the primitive document. We have many versions of this document which are called P<sup>1</sup>, P<sup>2</sup>, showing it was revised several times. Another frequent reference is to P<sup>G</sup>, meaning that P is the groundwork of the whole.

Like the other documents this is a separate, original work, and like them, too, it is a history of Israel. The author is unknown, as are the authors of the other three, but many of the Jews believed that Ezra, the priest, who was so active in the rebuilding of the city and the Temple, was the author. At present this opinion is not generally accepted.

We read a good example from this document in the story of the Creation in Genesis i., and we repeat some of its characteristics then drawn from the story. This priestly writer was, of course, very set and formal and methodical in his style and then, living much later than the authors of the other documents, had these three back of him, together with all composites of these. Like them, too, he had all the old traditions, for Abraham almost two thousand years before had left Ur of the Chaldees near Babylon. In their captivity in Babylon these Jews were near their home of centuries before, and the old traditions of the Babylonians might be familiar to these captive Jews. This priest and the other captives with him would have an opportunity to compare the Babylonian stories of the Creation, for instance, and the Deluge, with the stories of the Jews. The priestly writer would draw then not only upon the old traditions back of him and the documents J, E, and D, but also upon his



present knowledge and Babylonian records. Then, too, this priest would have the teaching of the prophets, which, beginning in the eighth or ninth century before Christ, extended until the time of the fall of Jerusalem when Jeremiah's prophecy was written by Baruch.

We may imagine this exile priest, either alone or in company with other Jewish priests, thinking over the familiar stories, told and written, trying to evolve a story that would satisfy his legal, priestly mind. He studies the whole, probably discusses it with his learned friends, and relates the story of the Creation as a cosmic creation—which would never have occurred to the early story-teller.

He begins with the history of the world and narrows it to the Jewish race. One of the great things in the history of the Jews from the time of the fall was the fact that a Redeemer was promised to them, a Messiah that should come from the seed of Abraham and the House of David and the tribe of Judah.

This great promise lights up the history of the Jews through the centuries. They were continually looking for this Messiah. What, then, would this priestly writer consider important as he studied the records of his people? Would not one great thing be this? What is the proof that we, descendants of Abraham, are entitled to the blessing not only of the Promised Land but to all that was included in the covenant with Abraham and reaffirmed later to others? He would at once conclude that "To prove our right to the Promised Land and to the Messiah, I must have an accurate

record of the descent of the Jews." So, if we read this priestly writer carefully, we shall find him always emphasizing genealogy. The priestly writer traces the descent through the eldest son from the time of Abraham down to his time. This careful genealogical record is one of the greatest proofs he could give, as it is the basis of the claim that he and the race he represents are entitled to all the blessings that God has promised. He gathers his data just as a lawyer studying his case at the present time does. Another point, following naturally from this, would be the fact that he would pay a great deal of attention to chronological order, to dates and genealogies. We remember how many chapters have in them little else but the genealogy of the greatest men of their race. It is safe to assume that such a genealogy comes from the priestly-legal document because of the effort of the writer to keep before everybody the truth that his race shall have a deliverer who shall make the people of Israel the greatest people in the world. Like any other lawyer, too, he is fond of statistics. In the story of the flood, for instance, he gives the dimensions of the ark. The story-teller does not care about cubits, but this man deals in statistics. Neither does this priest feel satisfied with the idea that God is a man. He sees that it is absurd, and so out of this development of the idea of God through about four hundred years the priest evolves the idea that God is spiritual; and he gives a nobler, purer, and simpler picture of the history of the Creation than any other writer. The priestly-legal nature and style, however, dominate

the whole. As we have seen, this style is marked by repetition of words and phrases, by set formulas, by statistics similar to that of the lawyer nowadays. It is really prosaic but makes a very good framework into which to fit the other documents. This document is in fact a summary of both oral and written history and is what we should call to-day the last edition of the documents.

#### SUMMARY

1. There were four documents—J, E, D, and P with composites, the most important being the JE.

2. They date approximately B. C. 850, 750, 661, and 460.

3. The Pentateuch is a compilation from all other sources and a last revision of the documents.

4. At the time of the fall of Jerusalem, B. C. 586, the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity, the literature of the Jews consisted of oral tradition, fragments of ancient writings, the lost books, the three documents, J, E, D, as well as composites and revisions of these. They also had the teachings of the prophets up to that time, both oral and written.

5. At the end of the Captivity, they possessed in addition to these mentioned the document P and whatever knowledge they gained in Babylon.

6. The influence of the Exile is shown in their vocabulary and in the effect the Babylonian symbols had on their style.

7. The canon of the Law, which the Jews reverence above all else, was then complete.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CANON OF THE PROPHETS

Contemporaneous with this narrative work, there was growing up among the Jews from the early monarchy a kind of literature now known as that part of the Bible called the canon of the Prophets. This section is generally divided into two groups. The first group is known as the Former Prophets or Prophetic Histories and contains the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. To understand the background of the writings of the Prophets, we must glance at the history of the two kingdoms.

After the revolt of the ten tribes from the son of Solomon, the territory of the Northern Kingdom, or the Kingdom of Israel, lay more in the direct route of the Eastern peoples going to Egypt, and was, therefore, more exposed to invasion. This kingdom suffered greatly from war and finally after many vicissitudes was conquered by the great Assyrian king, Sargon II. After a siege of three years, the capital, Samaria, was taken, and the Northern Kingdom ended in B. C. 722.

The fall of the Northern Kingdom is briefly narrated in the Bible as follows:

Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged

it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away unto Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. . . . And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Avva, and from Hamath and Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.<sup>1</sup>

This record is confirmed by the translation of inscriptions recently found upon the stone lining of the palace walls of King Sargon in Khorsabad. There are two which refer to the fate of the ten tribes. The first is:

I besieged and captured the city of Samaria, and I carried away 27,280 of its inhabitants as captives. I took fifty of their chariots. I restored the city, and causing the inhabitants to be more in number than before, I stationed my lieutenants over them. I made the people of the lands which I had conquered, to dwell there, and I collected from them the same amount of tribute as from the Assyrians.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the inscriptions there is a representation of a long line of exiles passing before a tally-keeper who counts them as they file past.

Another inscription reads: "The people of Tamud, Ibadid . . . who never gave tribute to the kings, my

<sup>1</sup> II Kings xvii. 5, 6, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Edgar J. Banks, *The Bible and the Spade*.

fathers, I subdued and deported and caused to dwell in the city of Samaria.”<sup>3</sup>

After the fall of Samaria, the victorious Sargon, as we have just read, deported the more wealthy and influential people of Israel to foreign cities in the far East, which he had already subdued. By intermarriage with these foreign people the deported Jews gradually became absorbed by these peoples, thereby losing their identity as a nation.

Meanwhile the great mass of these conquered Jews of the Northern Kingdom were left in Samaria. What was their fate? According to the Bible record and the inscription quoted, Sargon planted colonists from Babylonia and Syria in Samaria. By intermarriage with these foreign colonists and the heathen around them these Jews, as well as their deported brethren, lost their identity as Hebrews and became the ancestors of the Samaritans, whom the Palestinian Jews so bitterly hated and despised. In both cases, the ten tribes of Israel “were lost” naturally and effectively by absorption into other races.

During their history as a separate kingdom from the death of Solomon B. C. 937 to the end of the kingdom in B. C. 722, one of their ablest kings was Omri, the father of Ahab, one of the most wicked of their rulers. Omri reigned from B. C. 887-875, and Ahab from B. C. 875-853. We are particularly interested in these two reigns because of the inscription on the Moabite Stone found in 1868. Its translation throws light on the relations of the children of Israel

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



with the Moabites at that time, on the geography of the places mentioned, and on the state of civilization. It also records, from a Moabite point of view, the battle with the Israelites, told in the third chapter of II Kings. It proves that a great advance had been made in the art of writing, for the inscription on the Moabite stone shows the use of a phonetic alphabet, the first instance known until the very recent discoveries. Another reign, that of Jeroboam II (B. C. 781-740), was remarkable because of the extension of the borders of the kingdom and the internal prosperity, favorable to industrial pursuits and literary activity. Probably it was during this reign that the second document E was written.

During the existence of the Northern Kingdom the people, following their wicked kings, fell into grievous idolatry and disobedience to Jehovah. The prophets then became a great force in the life of Israel because of their denunciations of evil and of their wicked kings, and because of the prophecy of the ruin which finally overtook them.

Meanwhile the Southern Kingdom with its capital at Jerusalem also had to fight for its existence, carrying on warfare with the surrounding races and with the several conquerors of the different nations as they successively rose in power. Finally this Kingdom of Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem, and carried away many of the Jews captive into Babylon in B. C. 586. For the most part, however, the Jews were allowed to settle in groups in Babylonia, and, barring the fact that they



were captives in a strange land, their life was not so hard. Living in communities of their own people, they kept their identity as a nation, always looking back with longing to Jerusalem, their holy city, and Solomon's Temple. The psalmist expresses their great longing and grief in the words, "they hung their harps on the willow trees and said, how can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land." <sup>4</sup>

After several years of exile Cyrus, the great Persian king, issued an edict in B. C. 538 allowing all Jews who wished, to return to Palestine and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. A few availed themselves of this opportunity and began a discouraging work, hampered by lack of money and by their enemies around them. Finally, after the edict of Cyrus had been reaffirmed by a later Persian king, a larger group of the exiles went back to Palestine under the spiritual guidance of Ezra the priest and under Nehemiah as governor. This group, the minority of the exiles of the Kingdom of Judah, returned to Palestine about the middle of the fifth century B. C., and settled in their native city.

After the walls of the city had been repaired and the Temple rebuilt, we get a wonderful picture in Nehemiah <sup>5</sup> of the people assembled together in the street before the water gate of Jerusalem, listening for hours to Ezra, the priest. Standing on a pulpit of wood, he and his helpers read the law of the Lord and interpreted it to the people. Not the least important and interesting detail in this picture is the fact that the book which Ezra was reading, the law

<sup>4</sup> Ps. cxxxvii. 1-4.

<sup>5</sup> Neh. viii.

of the Lord, was probably the document P, the fourth and last document, written while the Jews were in captivity in Babylon.

To prevent confusion, two facts must be borne in mind. In B. c. 722 the Kingdom of Israel, the Northern Kingdom, ceased to exist; and the rejoicing people, listening reverently to Ezra, were the minority part of the returned exiles of the Southern Kingdom or Judah.

Although seemingly an independent kingdom later, from B. c. 135-63, yet practically Judah lost its power nationally and politically at the fall of Jerusalem and the exile in B. c. 586. Afterward it became tributary to whatever nation was the world ruler—Babylonian, Persian, Greek, or Roman.

One of the most significant facts in this return was the action of the majority group of the exiles. Although allowed and encouraged to return by the edict of the Persian king, yet they chose to remain in Babylon. Perhaps they may have done so as a matter of conscience, thinking they could help their brethren better by remaining in Babylon and making money by trading with the world; or maybe, like ourselves, they hushed their consciences by some such reason. The Jews who returned to Jerusalem were really the minority group of the exiles of Judah, sometimes called the Palestinian Jews.

On the other hand, the majority of these exiled Jews, called in history the Jews of the Dispersion, or Greater Israel, remained in Babylon and from there spread over all the then known world, coming into contact

with men of all races. In B. C. 331, when Alexander the Great founded the city of Alexandria in Egypt, Jews formed about half of the population. These Jews, meeting men of all nations, especially the Greeks, became familiar with their culture and philosophy and learned something of their great men, like Plato and Socrates. Through this association they absorbed Greek culture and became more tolerant and broad-minded than the Palestinian Jews. These, living in Palestine and coming into contact with few outsiders, were narrow and self-centered, and always inclined to emphasize strongly the superiority of the Jewish race and the fact that they were the chosen people of God. In contrast, the Jews of the Dispersion, influenced by the culture and learning of the Greeks, were willing to admit there was something good outside of Jewish religion and philosophy. Spreading over the world, they were unwittingly instrumental in preparing the way for Christianity; for wherever they went they carried their sacred literature and the knowledge of one God. Their mother tongue was the Hebrew; but these Jews, transacting business with all peoples, naturally used the tongue spoken by these nations. Gradually Hebrew was displaced by the language understood by all. Finally the descendants of the Jews, speaking the universal tongue, forgot the Hebrew. Hebrew, not spoken or written, not even understood by the mass of the later generations, became a classic. Even at the return of the exiles from Babylonia to Jerusalem, doubtless Aramaic was the tongue generally used and understood by the Jews. Through disuse the

Hebrew was even then partially displaced by the Aramaic. In their synagogue services the necessity for oral translation of their Hebrew books into Aramaic indicates this. These oral translations, literal or free, were committed to writing later and became the targums. All their sacred literature, though, was written in Hebrew. After the conquest of the world by Alexander the Great, Greek became the universal language. Therefore, if the Jews were to understand their literature, it had to be translated into Greek.

From this sketch of the two kingdoms we see their troubled history—at war sometimes with each other, generally with foreign nations. There were very few periods in their history when they were free to devote themselves to internal improvement. But invasion and foreign vassalage were not the worst things in their history. The people, encouraged by the example of their wicked kings, gave themselves over to idolatry, neglected the commands of Jehovah, and forgot their loyalty to Him. In such a state of things they were very much in need of reproof, of warning against the perils of a continued course of such action, of exhortation to repent, and of encouragement to reform. This was the chief work of the prophets.

We notice the prominent part played by Samuel and Nathan in the reigns of Saul and David; and, after the division of the kingdom, we find Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah with their contemporaries and successors known as the Prophets.

Who were these prophets? It is difficult to define the word prophet. Perhaps it is true to say that a

Jewish prophet was a man who lived close to God and, by so living, understood God and His purposes with regard to the Jewish nation; and, understanding Him, was able to become the mouthpiece of God to the people. Knowing, too, the history of the Jews perfectly, this man could see what a certain course of action—disobedience to God for example—had resulted in for the people in the past, and what would be the inevitable end if these actions were continued.

At the command of God the prophet went before the kings and the people, telling what great things God had done for them, thus trying to awaken their consciences and lead them to mend their ways. But at the same time he would warn them of the terrible result of persisting in their idolatry and disobedience. Prophets were, then, we might say, the mouthpieces of God, wise statesmen, preachers of righteousness, “the enlightened conscience of the nation,” exhorting the Jews to turn from their disobedience, and warning them against their present course by telling them of their future destruction and ruin if they still persisted in disobeying God.

These prophets became very prominent first in the history of the Northern Kingdom, the ten tribes. Elijah denounced the wicked King Ahab as early as the last part of the ninth century B. C. Elijah was followed by Elisha, Amos, and Hosea in the Northern Kingdom, which ended, as the reader will remember, with the fall of Samaria. Before this time Isaiah began to be very active in the Southern Kingdom, and the list of the prophets in this kingdom runs up to



the Babylonian Captivity, through the time of the Exile and afterwards, including the post-exilic prophets.

At first their prophecies were oral, repeated over and over again by the hearers, and finally written in part in the narrative books, but with no special effort to retain them otherwise. Some of these prophetic utterances are found in the first section of the canon of the Prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. This group, the Former Prophets, is also known as the Prophetic Histories, because the influence of the prophets furnished the stimulus to gather and compile them.

The second group of the canon of the Prophets, known as the Latter Prophets, is divided into two classes—the three Major and the twelve Minor Prophets. The Major include Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; the Minor, or the Twelve, begin with Hosea in the canonical list and conclude with Malachi, and form the last twelve books of the Protestant Old Testament. These prophets, though often suffering persecution, were always honored by the Jewish nation, and felt to be more divinely inspired than any other of their great men except Moses. Consequently, their prophecies became more precious, so that, after the Babylonian Exile, the Jews were willing to admit them beside the Law as a part of their divinely inspired literature. In fact, the canon of the Prophets, like that of the Law, is a compilation, having as sources the lost books, like that of Jasher, and the narratives, as well as the oral and written utterances of the

prophets. References to the lost books have been already noted in the Prophetic Histories or Former Prophets. The book of Isaiah has many good illustrations of this process of compilation, but perhaps the plainest may be found in the book of Jeremiah. For example, let us compare II Kings xxiv. 18-xxv. 21 with Jeremiah lii. 1-27. The two accounts are almost identical in content and words. This could be neither an accident nor a coincidence but proves that the sources of the two were the same and illustrates the method of compilation. Traces of this process are very noticeable. If we turn to Jeremiah i. 1-3 we can see the redactor's work in comparison with Jeremiah's words in i. 4-19. Again, in the last verse of the fifty-first chapter we read, "Thus far the words of Jeremiah"; and in chapter xxxvi. 32 we find that after the dictation to Baruch was ended, "There were added besides unto them many like words." These quotations illustrate the sources used by the redactor.

It is interesting to know what was the method of composing and preserving these prophecies. Probably they were written down by a disciple or by a scribe of the prophet. From "Jeremiah" <sup>6</sup> we see the method. After giving the date, it is recorded that "this word came unto Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying: Take thee a roll of a book and write therein all the words I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all nations . . . Then Jeremiah called Baruch . . . and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah, which he had

<sup>6</sup> Jer. xxxvi. 1-32.

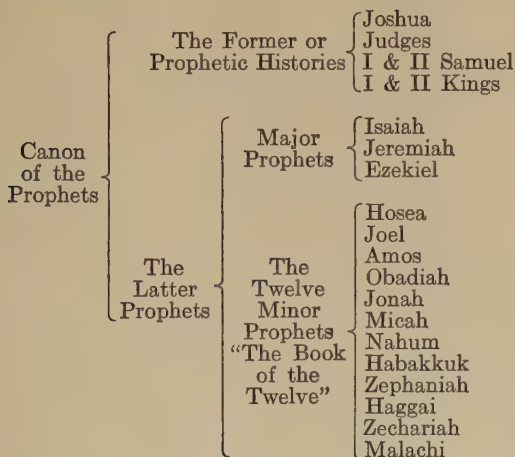


spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." Since Jeremiah was in prison, suffering because he had dared to warn the wicked king and his court, Baruch was sent to read the message to the people, the princes, and the king. After reading the roll to the princes, Baruch answers the question, "How didst thou write all these words at his mouth?" by saying, "He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth and I wrote them with ink in the book." The wicked king, however, did not hesitate to throw the roll into the fire. "Then the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah after the king had burned the roll. . . . Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, hath burned." From the whole chapter we note several points: the manner in which the prophecy was written—Jeremiah and his scribe committing God's message to writing—the state of the kingdom, and the subject matter of the prophecy.

From this one record the purport of the prophetic message of the prophets, both major and minor, can be learned. Sometimes the prophecies were personal, often against the children of Israel, or against Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Moab, or any enemy of the Israelites. Along with the warning to the Jews was the exhortation to turn from their wicked ways or doom would surely follow.

After the Babylonian Captivity the Jews gathered and preserved these prophecies, regarding them as second to the Law only. These books of the prophets together with those of the post-exilic prophets form

the second period in the making of the Bible. A good classification and the one generally given is indicated in the following outline:



## CHAPTER VI

### CANON OF THE WRITINGS CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

But the Law with its revisions and the canon of the Prophets were not the only Hebrew books. Many men were writing works of all kinds, both poetry and prose. Knowledge of the alphabet had made writing easier, the habit of writing was formed, and Jewish national life was stirring and full of events. Their literature comprised proverbs, histories, poetry—every form of writing. Before the canon of the Old Testament was made, this great mass of literature was very well known because it had been repeated again and again and because it was read and commented upon in the synagogues. Probably also much of it had been committed to memory. When the time came, then, for choosing the material for their sacred book, they could act intelligently; for they knew their literature thoroughly and had tried out its helpfulness.

We shall divide this great mass of writing outside of the Law and the Prophets into the three following classes. The Writings, or the canonical books, meaning those that are in the canon of the Old Testament; the Apocrypha, or non-canonical books, those that

are not included in the Protestant canon of the Old Testament; and a third very large class outside of these two. The apocryphal books are sometimes called ecclesiastical, because, though not in the Old Testament canon, yet they were often read in the Jewish services, and discourses were frequently based upon themes from them. Thus, by usage, these books became familiar to all.

Let us consider first The Writings, which make the third section of the Old Testament canon and the third period in its growth. The Writings were called the Kethubim by the Hebrews and the Hagiographa by the Greeks, the three names meaning the same thing in the different languages. If we look at the table of contents of the Old Testament we find a number of books not listed in the former divisions—the Law and the Prophets. These books are The Writings, variously classified for convenience. A good grouping is this: (1) The Poetical Books—Job, Psalms, and Proverbs; (2) The Five Rolls—Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations; (3) The Remaining Books—I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel. The books are given in the order in which they are found in our Bibles, not in the order of the Hebrew Bibles nor in the chronological order, which in many cases we do not know. We do know, however, that many are not placed in the order written; for instance, I and II Chronicles, if not the very last, are among the last books of the Old Testament written, and yet they are inserted after the first third of the Old Testament books.

The poetical books are familiar to everyone having any knowledge of the Bible, but we should remember that the Bible outside of this group is full of great poetry, scattered throughout the different books. There are the wonderful songs, long and short, recorded in the narrative books mainly; and the beautiful poetic short stories, like that of Ruth. The prophets, too, in their highest strains of prophecy rise into lyric poetry; and we find the highest poetical imagination in the prophecy of Isaiah the Second. But the books of Psalms, Job, Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and Lamentations are classified as the poetical books. The last two, however, are put among the Rolls, because they were in the form of rolls for use in the services on certain stated feast days.

The book of Psalms, which in the Hebrew Bible is placed first in the order of the poetical books, has always been the favorite and best-known book of the Bible outside of the Gospels. It appeals to the individual in his times of repentance and sorrow as well as in his periods of rejoicing and exaltation. How many of the Psalms were written by David is a moot question. Some claim that about one-half were written by this very human king and tell his life story which, like all human life, is but a "succession of falls." Hence they find in the struggle of David their life struggle, and are thus comforted and inspired.

From the earliest times,<sup>1</sup> even before the formal worship of the Tabernacle, choral singing, generally antiphonal, was a part of Hebrew worship. Later we

<sup>1</sup> I Chron. xvi. 41-42; II Chron. xx. 21.

read <sup>2</sup> that David in connection with the Temple service appointed certain of the sons of Asaph as well as others "to prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals." To the former are credited twelve of the Psalms, to the sons of Korah eleven, to Ethan and Moses one each, to Solomon two, while about one-third are anonymous. These Psalms, then, have their roots in the national life and were preserved by repetition, especially by choral singing, often accompanied by musical instruments.

The book of Job has as its setting an old folklore tale with its hero Job. Into this as a framework is fitted the discussion of many of the difficult problems of life, as old as the bit of folklore and as modern as to-day. We know nothing of the author and are not sure about the date of the book, but it is commonly thought to be not earlier than the time of Jeremiah and probably was written about the time of the Babylonian Captivity. It is one of the Wisdom books of the Bible; and this fact alone shows how much later the subject matter is than the old folk-story, for it deals with the problem of life—why do the righteous suffer—and the attempted explanations and answers to this question. What we now call the "dark questions" of life are presented and discussed, but the only conclusion arrived at is that men must trust where they cannot see or explain. In Job is found some of the grandest poetry in literature, both in conception and in figurative language. It has been presented dramatically to-day on the stage, but in its last analy-

<sup>2</sup> I Chron. xxv. 1 ff.



sis it is an argument, lacking the action necessary for a drama.

Proverbs, another book belonging to the Wisdom literature of the Bible, is generally credited to Solomon, but, like the book of Psalms, its authorship is uncertain. This book again illustrates the method of compilation. It may be that Solomon compiled the wise decisions of experience, just as most of the sayings of Benjamin Franklin in *Poor Richard's Almanac* are not original with him but a compilation of past wisdom, often put by him into an original and better form. Proverbs are the experience of the race put into pithy, epigrammatic form, and therefore the possession of the race. The familiar last chapter of Proverbs rehearses the sayings of the mother of King Lemuel. Probably these belong to the great mass of oral tradition finally written and later lost except in allusions and quotations. Another reference shows that the method of preservation during the monarchy was by *copying*.

The Five Rolls were thus named because each was written in the form of a roll for the sake of convenience in the service of the Temple. Among them, we know well the two beautiful stories of Ruth and Esther; perhaps some of the wisdom recorded in Ecclesiastes; a little less of Lamentations, and still less of The Song of Solomon or Canticles. The meaning of the last is as puzzling as Revelation in the New Testament, and is a perpetual subject for discussion.

We call the third division the Remaining Books, because it is the only name which will include all. Were



it not for the book of Daniel, they could be grouped as histories. Ezra and Nehemiah may be called the history of Judah at the time of the return from the Babylonian Captivity to Jerusalem. They give the number and the names of those who returned, their struggles in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and their final success. Chronicles is the last political record of the kings of Israel—what they did and how they fared. In these books written last, we see constant references to sources, many of which are known now only by these references. From them, too, we gather that many of these books were of a political character, preserving records of the official acts of the several kings.

The book of Daniel is a different form of Jewish literature—an apocalypse; and “Daniel” is often called the parent book of apocalyptic writings. Both the nouns apocalypse and apocrypha and the corresponding adjectives apocalyptic and apocryphal are often confused. Their meaning is quite different. Apocrypha and apocryphal are words applied to the non-canonical works. What is really difficult to distinguish is the difference between the apocalypse and the prophecy, because they are akin. Since the former marks a new form in Hebrew literature, it is well to have the distinction clear.

The prophet writes under his own name, taking his stand in the present; and, being in sympathy with and understanding the present, “so interprets current history as to disclose divine forces at work therein and the inevitable outcome of a certain course of con-

duct.”<sup>3</sup> Apply this to Jeremiah, for example. He wrote under his own name, took his stand in his own time, understood life in his time and showed the divine forces at work in Jewish history then, as well as the inevitable result of a certain course of action.

On the other hand, the writer of the apocalypse wrote under the name of a celebrated man of the past, long dead, and taking his stand in that past, “rewrote the past in terms of prophecy in the name of some hero or seer of Jewish history.”<sup>4</sup> His picture of the past would necessarily be accurate; but his view of the future was very general and vague, because he had little spiritual understanding of the present and did not clearly see God’s hand in existing conditions. He saw only the misery and suffering of the present and could comfort his people only by the promise of a wonderful deliverance in the future.

There is another point of distinction between the two forms of writing; namely, the use of symbols. Prophecy employed figures and symbols to make abstract ideas clear; apocalyptic writing employed “allegorically an elaborate machinery of symbol, chief among which were sheep, bulls, birds, as well as mythological beings like Beliar and Antichrist.”<sup>5</sup> This method of writing shows the Babylonian influence on the Jewish style, naturally figurative, and the added influence of the Greeks. It was really a new style of writing grafted on the Hebrew style and used very awkwardly sometimes.

<sup>3</sup> Shailer Mathews in *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

The author of the book of Daniel is unknown; he adopted the name Daniel, famous in Jewish history for wisdom and righteousness; he wrote the past as if from the point of view of his supposed author. He saw the awful misery of the Jews in his own time, about B. C. 168, and tried to comfort and encourage them by the promise of a miraculous deliverance. The book of Daniel shows the use of these striking symbols, these fearful and awful beasts. To illustrate, we read Daniel viii. In the ninth verse there is a reference to the "little horn" which grew up among the "ten horns." Historians interpret the "little horn" as a symbol of Antiochus, who in his zeal for Hellenizing the Jews made his name hated and loathed by this nation. Authors adopted the method and style of the book of Daniel and there were many books of this nature written during the first century before Christ, as well as in the first century after. None of these except Daniel is found in the list of Old Testament canonical books, and there is but one in the New Testament—the book of Revelation.

These three divisions—the poetical books, the Five Rolls, and the Remaining Books make the canon of The Writings and complete the Old Testament list of canonical books. Their completion marks the third and last period in the making of the books of the Hebrew Bible. The Jews must have valued The Writings very highly to have given them a place alongside of the Law and Prophets. But besides the natural pride of the Jews in their literature and the national feeling of reverence and love, deepened by their exile

in Babylon, there was one more terrible event in Jewish history which drew them together more closely and made them love their religion and sacred literature more dearly than life itself. From Josephus and I Maccabees we get a vivid picture of a diabolic persecution—the torture of young and old, the awful treatment of offenders, the violent deaths, and what to the Jews was the greatest calamity, the defilement and desecration of their Temple and their holy places. Like all calamities, this awful persecution had the effect of drawing them more closely together and leading them to preserve more zealously their sacred literature. Why not? It is a record of the history of the race from the call of Abraham—a literature full of heroes, great kings, poets, and prophets. Out of their knowledge of this literature and their love and reverence for it would naturally and inevitably come the choice of the greatest of these books for their sacred book, now the Old Testament.

The choosing of books for the canonical list, then, became a very simple matter. This final selection was determined by the question which of all these books contain the message of God to the Jews, which have helped at all times? In fine, which books are the most worthy of reverence and obedience because, inspired by God,<sup>6</sup> they satisfy spiritual need?

The choice of books for both canons, the Old Testament and later the New Testament, was the answer to this question; for the selection was made by the great mass of the people, not by their priests and

<sup>6</sup> Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Inspiration," 4.

rulers. Usage had a great influence on this choice and naturally because some books were not well known or understood, a few would be questioned, like the Books of Esther and The Song of Solomon in the Old Testament. The canonicity of these two books was doubted by some of the rabbis; so the matter was finally decided and these books accepted by the Synod of Jamnia about A. D. 90-100. The noticeable fact is that about the greater number of books there was little or no question, the matter being decided by the people and based on their knowledge of the value of the books.

#### SUMMARY

1. The canon of the Law was probably agreed upon at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah; and under their influence the Pentateuch was considered as Holy Scripture.

2. The Pentateuch was a compilation of the documents J, E, and D with revisions and composites of these, making the document P. Its main sources were the oral tradition and written literature during the early history of the Jewish people.

3. The canon of the Prophets was settled some time prior to B. C. 200. Its source, besides the Law, was in the history of the two kingdoms.

4. The canon of The Writings was decided upon about B. C. 132.

5. The selection of the books of the Old Testament canon was made by the people in general and based upon their knowledge of the value of the books.

6. Their natural love and reverence for their sacred literature had been increased by the Babylonian Captivity and the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, B. C. 168.

7. The Old Testament is a great literature, telling the life and religion of a great nation.

8. It follows the natural stage of development beginning in oral tradition, and gradually through the centuries developing into the Documents and the later written work.

9. It was written in the Hebrew language, the mother tongue of the Jews, though that tongue was displaced by the Greek.

10. Recent discoveries and exploration have illustrated, elucidated, and confirmed the truth of Old Testament literature and indicate that science is the handmaid of religion.



The Law or Torah	{ Five Books of Moses	{ Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
The Former Prophets or Prophetic Histories		{ Joshua Judges Samuel Kings
The Latter Prophets	{ Major Prophets	{ Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel
	{ Minor Prophets—The Twelve	{ Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi
The Writings	{ Poetical Books	{ Job Psalms Proverbs
	{ Five Rolls	{ Ruth Esther Song of Solomon (Canticles) Ecclesiastes Lamentations
	{ Remaining Books	{ Ezra Nehemiah I & II Chronicles Daniel (An Apoc- alypse)

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SEPTUAGINT: THE APOCRYPHA

In order to understand the necessity for the Greek version, the Septuagint, we need to review a few points. As far back as the time of Ezra probably, the Hebrew language had fallen into disuse, and Aramaic was the principal language spoken by the Jews. Consequently, in their synagogue services the Hebrew had to be translated into the Aramaic. Sometimes this translation was literal, sometimes very free, making a paraphrase; and it was made orally to interpret to the Jews the meaning of that day's reading. Afterward these paraphrases were committed to writing, forming targums on the Law or on any book. A targum, then, is a translation or paraphrase of any part of the Scripture from the ancient Hebrew into the Aramaic, and was made in order to enable the Jews to understand the meaning of the Hebrew. Sometimes these targums would include not only the paraphrase but current tradition and would imaginatively and figuratively develop a thought or theme suggested by Scripture, for the purpose of instructing or edifying the Jewish congregation. The most important of these targums and the oldest is that of Onkelos to the Pentateuch, which is a literal translation and was committed to

writing in the latter part of the first century A. D. Other noted ones are the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch and the Targum pseudo-Jonathan to the prophetic books; the targums to the poetical books and to the Five Rolls. There are no targums to Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, because these books were written mainly in the Aramaic and therefore needed none.

These targums form a great deal of literature commenting on the Jewish Old Testament, and are, therefore, enlightening and helpful in some cases. But the reason underlying the oral and written targum was the same as that which finally led to the demand for the Greek translation of the Hebrew scripture.

We recall that the Jews of the Dispersion, after spreading over the world, had forgotten Hebrew after a time and were using the Greek language. Consequently, their sacred literature would be worthless to them unless translated into the Greek. Such a movement doubtless began earlier than we can fix the date. It is known, however, that about B. C. 250, or in that century at least, the Egyptian monarch, Ptolemy Philadelphus, asked for a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament for his great library at Alexandria. This desire of the king would naturally give a stimulus to the translation of the Hebrew literature into the Greek, and the translation of the Law was probably begun then. But the main reason for the translation was the fact that the Jews themselves could not understand their own sacred writings. Their Law, of course, was revered above all things. They and their children must have a knowledge of this. To

enable them to become familiar with it, it had to be put into the language used—the Greek. The origin of the translation, then, was the demand of the times for their sacred literature in a tongue which was known generally. An added spur to action was found in the desire of Ptolemy for a Greek translation. Probably the Jews began in the third century B. C. to translate the Pentateuch and the complete translation of the Old Testament was finished about B. C. 132. This is the oldest version of the Jewish Bible, version meaning a translation from one language into another. This version, the Septuagint or the LXX, contained besides the list of books in our Protestant Old Testament and in the Jewish Bible several other books which are not canonical books but ecclesiastical, called the Apocrypha. To account for the inclusion of these books in this version we review briefly a fact in the history of the Jews of the Dispersion.

This group of Jews, mingling with the people of all countries and learning something of Greek culture, became, as we have seen, more tolerant and broad-minded, while the Palestinian Jews, having gone back to Jerusalem and living within themselves, were narrow and self-centered. When the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into the Greek in order to give the Jews an understanding of their own sacred literature, delegates from the Palestinian Jews and also from the Alexandrian Jews of the Dispersion made this translation. After the translation, when it came to the question of admitting the Apocrypha into the canon, the liberal Jews were willing to admit the books

on the ground that many of them were edifying. The Palestinian Jews, however, were opposed, and so the Hebrew Old Testament list of canonical books remained as it is in the Protestant Bible; that is, the Jews never accepted the Apocrypha. But the version of the Septuagint or the LXX, owing to the influence of the more liberal Jews, contained these, although even these Alexandrian Jews did not look upon them as equal to the canonical list.

The placing of these books in the Septuagint version gave a precedent for following versions; and, as the LXX is important in the history of the Bible, being the first version and a translation made directly into the Greek from the Hebrew, its influence is seen on noted versions following. In A. D. 383-404, when Jerome, the great scholar, made a new version of the Bible, because the copies of the Old Latin had become corrupt, he would have omitted the Apocrypha from the canonical list on the ground that, having used both the Hebrew and the LXX as well as the Old Latin as sources for his work, he agreed with the Palestinian Jews. But the head of the Catholic Church and others in authority decided that these books should be included. Thus Jerome's great version of the Bible—the Latin Vulgate—contains the apocryphal books. This version became the Bible of the Western Church for about one thousand years, until the Reformation, in fact. The Catholic Church then divided into two great churches, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. At the Council of Trent, in A. D. 1546, the Roman Catholic Church adopted as its ver-

sion of the Bible the Latin Vulgate. Hence the Apocrypha became a part of the Old Testament canon in the Catholic Bible and the books are placed on a par with the canonical books. The usage of the Greek Catholic Church has varied, sometimes including these books and sometimes omitting them, as the Protestant Bible does. The influence of the Septuagint, then, placed the apocryphal books in the Latin Vulgate, and consequently in the Roman Catholic Bible. This difference in the canon of the two churches grew out of the fact that the Palestinian Jews rejected the Apocrypha as part of the canon, while the Alexandrian Jews allowed them a place in the Septuagint. The canon of the Old Testament insisted upon by the Jews of Palestine is the canon of the Protestant Old Testament to-day.

It is very interesting to study the making of this first version from Hebrew into Greek. Tradition tells some wonderful stories like, for instance, the one neither authentic nor reasonable, that there were seventy translators—hence the name Septuagint or the LXX—and each, working independently in a separate cell, finished his work, and lo! when the finished translations were compared, they agreed exactly word for word. Any one who has made a translation from a foreign language knows how impossible this would be. Other wonderful stories are told also, showing that this translation seemed very important to them, for its making became a theme for the imagination. We like to think what was probably the case, that it was made on the island of Pharos, off the coast of Alexandria.



Thus this translation made Pharos remarkable not only for one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—the great lighthouse—but also for a version that became a beacon light in the history of the Church. The truth is that probably it was made just as versions have since been made by a representative body, working independently as individuals or as a committee. When the translation of sections was finished, a part was taken, different translations of the text were compared and discussed critically, and finally the opinion of the majority was accepted as the true text.

#### SUMMARY

(1) The Septuagint was a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the original tongue, into the Greek language, made because Hebrew had become a classic and was therefore not understood by the Jews in general. (2) It was made by a delegation of representatives from both the Palestinian Jews and the Alexandrian Jews of the Dispersion—at Pharos probably—and finished so long before Christ that the Jews had become familiar with this Greek version of the Old Testament before Christ's birth. (3) It was the version familiar to Christ and the disciples because their quotations are made from this version. Stephen, the first martyr, in his defense in the book of Acts,<sup>1</sup> narrating the dealings of God with the Jews of old, quotes from the Septuagint version. (4) It included the Apocrypha because of a wish of the Alexandrian Jews. (5) Its influence was and is of the greatest value, for

<sup>1</sup> Acts vii.

it was the first version of the Old Testament; it was used as a basis for following versions; and, lastly, it is of the greatest value in getting at the true text of the Bible.

Because the apocryphal books mark the external difference between the Bible versions of the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, it is well to speak of them briefly. The list includes eleven books, called the Apocrypha. We have already accounted for their inclusion in the Roman Catholic Bible.

Before the Septuagint version was made, in the third stage of the making of the Bible, namely, that of The Writings, we recall there were at hand many books which the Jews did not accept as canonical. After a time, The Writings were judged worthy a place beside the Law and the Prophets, but some of the remaining ones, though acknowledged as good for reading even in the synagogues, did not, on the whole, measure up to the Jewish standard and, therefore, were not chosen for the Old Testament canon. In the list of omitted books, eleven stood out above the others and were given a place in the Roman Catholic version as we have seen. We must remember that until the Reformation in the sixteenth century the Church was undivided and was called the Catholic Church, Catholic meaning universal. After the split into two great divisions—the Roman Catholic and the Protestant—the Roman Catholics had several versions of the Bible from which to choose their accepted version, and officially adopted the Latin Vulgate as their version.

The names of these books are:

I & II Maccabees  
History of Susanna  
The Story of Bel and the Dragon  
Judith  
Ecclesiasticus  
Additions to Book of Esther  
Song of the Three Holy Children  
Tobit  
Baruch  
Wisdom of Solomon

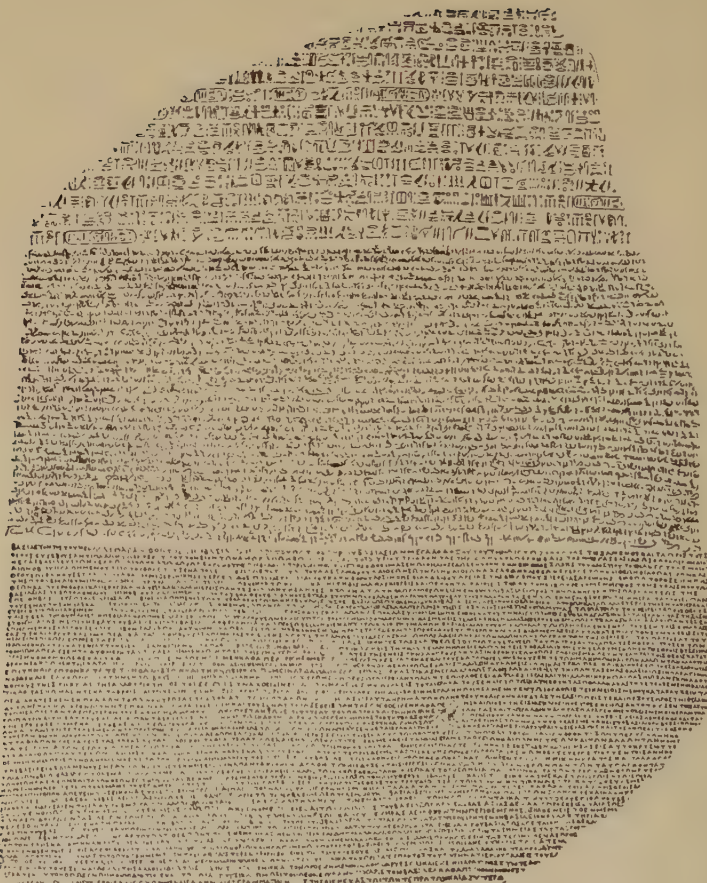
In nature and character these books are quite different, some being valuable, some puerile. Ecclesiasticus is probably the most valuable of these books, being similar in style and subject matter to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and in ethical teaching to the book of Job. It belongs to what is called the Wisdom literature and originally was written in Hebrew by a Jew, and translated into Greek by his grandson about B. C. 132. We get a hint of the making of the canon of the Old Testament from the short preface to this translation, for in it the translator refers three times to the Law and the Prophets and the other books as the well-known and accredited sacred literature. First and Second Maccabees are histories, First Maccabees being especially fine as a historical work. It covers the time of the struggle of the Jews against Antiochus Epiphanes, the "little horn" of the beast described in Daniel.<sup>2</sup> The Additions to the Book of Esther make a continuation of the Book of Esther, and give a fuller record of the happenings formerly recorded. Aside from the added effectiveness of the story, these

<sup>2</sup> Dan. vii. 8.

chapters have no value. The History of Susanna forms the thirteenth chapter of Daniel and the story of Bel and the Dragon the fourteenth chapter of the same book, which in the Protestant Bible has but twelve chapters. These two stories laud the wisdom of Daniel and are in the nature of detective stories. The Song of the Three Holy Children is also given in Daniel, inserted in the third chapter between verses twenty-three and twenty-four. It is their song and prayer of gratitude and praise to Jehovah for their miraculous deliverance from death in the fiery furnace. Tobit and Judith are stories: the first, a romantic one, and the second, the adventures of the great heroine Judith in delivering her people from oppression. Baruch, containing the Epistle of Jeremy, is thought to have been written by the scribe of Jeremiah and is full of warning against idolatry. At the same time it endeavors to comfort the Jews in their captivity. The Wisdom of Solomon praises a religious life and wisdom and condemns idolatry and wickedness; it also belongs to the Wisdom literature.

Besides these eleven there are others, one or another of which was at times placed in an appendix in the Vulgate or in the Roman Catholic Bibles. These are frequently referred to by early Christian writers. There are also many other books called Pseudepigrapha, which, though not included in the Apochrypha, are often quoted and referred to; for example, the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, and the Sibylline Oracles.





THE ROSETTA STONE  
(From a photograph)



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPADE DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

In the preceding chapters we have seen the natural and inevitable growth of the Old Testament canon: its origin in oral tradition; its sources in the life of the people as shown in their history; its final crystallization into a form determined by the choice of the bulk of the people. We have noted, too, that this historical background has been emphasized and broadened as a result of the discoveries and explorations made during the last century. Many of these bear directly on Bible truth, confirming, clarifying, or verifying incidents in Bible history. In view of this help in the study of the Bible, we may heartily endorse the exclamation of a classical and witty friend: "I tell you, when it comes to studying the Bible, spades are trumps!"

Since these explorations are vital to our understanding of the history and civilization of the past, we may wonder why they were not carried on long ago. To-day, perhaps, we have more time, more money to spend in this way, greater knowledge of the ancient languages, and, what is far more important, more in-

terest in the life of these ancient peoples. In many countries men are specializing along the line of research into the civilization of long ago. But, no doubt, what gave a great stimulus to this kind of study was the discovery and translation of the Rosetta stone, found at the Rosetta mouth of the Nile in 1799. This stone bears three inscriptions: one written in the oldest kind of hieroglyphics called the Hieratic; a second inscribed in the later hieroglyphics, the Demotic; and a third in Greek. A French scholar, carefully examining these inscriptions, decided that the three recorded the same subject matter. Several things led to this conclusion, but especially the study of the proper names. The inscription had all the interest of a cipher record. Men could read and translate the Greek, and so found the key to the parallel inscriptions and thus the key to the reading of the old Egyptian hieroglyphics. The key to the deciphering of the cuneiform writing was found, too, after much laborious, painstaking, and persevering study on the part of Rawlinson and others. Some of the old picture writing is still a puzzle, but with the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics and the cuneiform writing found, very many of these ancient records have been translated. The story of the working out of the meaning of these systems of writing is as interesting as a romance.

With the ability to decipher these records written on clay, stone, or other material, the desire of finding them and giving their meaning to the world has become one of the ambitions of research students to-day. Our leading universities, as well as private individuals, are devoting large sums of money and much time to

discovery and exploration, searching for material and translating it when found. Many discoveries have been made in our own century, and men are hopeful of more that will illuminate the history of ancient civilization. We shall indicate here only a few of these discoveries; but they will illustrate the light thrown on Bible study by scientific research and promise a source of knowledge ever enlarging.

One of the most interesting discoveries during the last century was made by the unearthing of the palace of the Assyrian king, Assurbanipal, at Nineveh. This city was destroyed B. C. 606 and remained buried for centuries. Assurbanipal, or Sardanapalus, as the Greeks called him, was the last great king and ruled Nineveh from B. C. 668-626. Although varying estimates have been made of this king, no one can dispute the fact that he was a great collector of clay books or tablets which recorded not only the history of the Assyrian nation but also those of other peoples, particularly those of the Babylonians, who were closely related to the Assyrians. It has been estimated that this long-buried library contained about one hundred thousand of these stone tablets—a great library for that age of the world. This king of olden time appeals to us very strongly, not only because we owe him this great library, but also because we appreciate his love of books and his interest in gathering into his library all the literature of his own people, and, not satisfied with this, searching out and bringing clay records from all nations.

After part of this library had been taken to London and placed in the British Museum, some of the muti-

lated and fragmentary tablets were found to contain stories of the Creation, and indicated that the stories had been copied from still more ancient tablets whose origin is lost in remote antiquity. The Babylonians were familiar with these stories, and their similarity to the Bible account is full of interesting suggestions concerning the source of the Jewish creation story. On another fragment of a broken tablet, George Smith, one of the greatest Assyrian scholars of the day, found a few words from the story of the Flood. This discovery created the greatest interest, and immediately Smith was sent to the old palace in Nineveh to search for the missing fragments and was fortunate enough to discover the fragment containing most of the story. Since then other copies of the story have been found in the same palace, so the narrative is quite complete, although the tablets upon which it is written are mutilated. Like the Bible story, there is a hero, an ark, a great storm and increasing of the waters, and a sending out of birds—a dove, a swallow, and a raven. This account, too, tells of the appearance of the rainbow as a pledge that God would never again destroy the world with a flood. Comparing the Hebrew and Babylonian accounts, we realize that the Jews had back of them the same traditions as the Babylonians, Assyrians, and other nations living and ruling in turn over the great country about the Tigris and the Euphrates river. Abraham, when he left Ur of the Chaldees, carried the old stories with him as a part of his joint inheritance with the Babylonians.

The Moabite Stone, found in Diban, Moab, in 1868,

is another instance of the value of long unknown records. Although it was broken by the Arabs into many pieces when they saw the desire of other nations to possess it, yet, from a picture taken of it when whole and from the fragments, scholars have pieced together an inscription of thirty-four lines. Its date is about the ninth or tenth century B. C.; and it is especially remarkable for the fact that it is the first long inscription using a phonetic alphabet found thus far. Scholars think this alphabet was invented by the Phœnicians, a branch of the Sumerian race, to which the Jews belonged or whom they supplanted. Historically, then, it is important because it shows that men had at that time or before overcome their worst handicap in writing, namely, the lack of an alphabet, although in the hieroglyphic and cuneiform writing, long before the date of this inscription, approaches to an alphabet had been noted. Again this record is valuable for geographical information, and it also indicates the civilization of the Moabites and their connection and relation with the Israelites. Part of the inscription relates a battle of the Moabites with the Israelites which is mentioned in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> The accounts vary because of the two points of view of the narrators, Moabites or Jews, but this record establishes the fact that there was such a battle between the two nations, thus confirming Bible history. The inscription also shows that the Moabite language and that of the Hebrews were practically identical.

Law codes also have been found cut in stone. Such

<sup>1</sup> II Kings iii. 4, 5.



a code is the Nippur code found in the ruins of the ancient city of Nippur, and written probably about three thousand years before Christ. But the code Bible students know best and therefore are the most interested in is that of the great Babylonian king, Hammurabi, who lived about B. C. 2150-2000, or about the time Abraham, his neighbor, was called out of Ur of the Chaldees; for if Amraphel of Genesis xiv. 1 is Hammurabi, as scholars believe, certainly Abraham was his contemporary. This code was found at Susa, Persia, by the French in their expeditions in the winter of 1901-1902. Very likely it stood in the city of Babylon about eleven hundred years and during the invasion of the Elamites was carried from Babylon to Susa by the successful invaders. It is somewhat mutilated but contains 282 sections, being not a religious code but a social and civil one. From its translation we learn first that these ancient Babylonians could write in cuneiform, although they had no alphabet; then, we find the customs, mode of life, kind of country, and civilization of these people about the time of the call of Abraham; third, we notice the similarity of the Mosaic code, written seven or eight centuries later, to the Babylonian code.

From a Biblical point of view we are especially interested in the comparison of the two codes, the Mosaic code found in Exodus,<sup>2</sup> Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, and the Hammurabi code written on this pillar. One point of difference is that the former is not only a civil code but a religious one. Some of

<sup>2</sup> Ex. xx, xxii, xxiii.



the civil laws of the two codes are almost identical. Many of the sections dealing with civil requirements are very similar, though the Babylonian code in many cases is more humane and liberal than that of the Hebrews. A comparison, for instance, of the two on the property rights of women plainly shows this. The Babylonian code is a series of laws growing out of their national life up to that time, just as the Hebrew is. The Mosaic code may have grown up in much the same way as that of Hammurabi, both being probably a series of legal decisions made as the emergency demanded and gathered at last and put into a code by a great lawgiver. They are very much alike in another respect. The upper part of the Babylonian stone represents Hammurabi, the great king, receiving from the Babylonian sun-god these laws engraved on stone, just as the Mosaic code represents Moses receiving the ten tablets from God on Mount Sinai. Sometimes we wonder if the Babylonian code influenced the Hebrew. Naturally this might be the case, since Abraham came out of Ur of the Chaldees, close to Babylon, about the time of the great king, Hammurabi, and, too, because the people of the Southern Kingdom wrote their priestly-legal document while in captivity in Babylon. Since the Jewish oral traditions and their natural sympathies would be similar to those of the Babylonians, their inherited knowledge would again be revived by coming into contact with Babylonian civilization, and some of the Mosaic laws might have been revised by the P author from his knowledge of the code of Hammurabi. We are really

not vitally concerned with the question whether the Hebrew laws were borrowed from this code, or whether both were taken from a common, earlier source. The Jews may have arrived at the same state of civilization later, making these laws necessary.

In both cases, that of Hammurabi and that of Moses, part of the work of these lawgivers was like what King Alfred did in his book of Dooms. This king collected decisions according to Old English law, adapting and fitting them to the life of the people in his day. These laws compiled in this way are known as the laws of King Alfred.

Another very important discovery both in general and Biblical history is the finding of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. These are a series of letters consisting of almost four hundred clay tablets found in the ruins of Tel-el-Amarna in Egypt, in 1887, by a peasant woman searching for stone beads for a necklace. They contain diplomatic correspondence between the subject and allied governors and kings in Babylon, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine and the Egyptian king—their overlord. They cover a period of about one hundred years, dating from near the middle of the fourteenth century B. C. Historically, they are a storehouse in which much can be found—the political and civil history of that day, the customs, the countries, and the relations of these different peoples with one another. They are important in Biblical history because we learn from them the manner in which the children of Israel probably entered and finally subdued the original Canaanitish inhabitants of

Palestine. Many people have an idea that the children of Israel under Joshua crossed the Jordan, invaded Canaan, and at once subdued the inhabitants, forgetting that these heathen had walled cities and strong towns and were a powerful enemy, too powerful to be subdued in such a brief space of time. These letters show that the conquering of Palestine was carried on in the natural way—by repeated invasions, by long wars in which one and another of their great hero judges, like Deborah and Jephthah, won victories over the heathen oppressing them. These Amarna letters refer again and again to the Habiri, certain warlike tribes invading Palestine. From the similarity of the names Habiri and Hebrew, scholars think that these invaders were the Jewish tribes.

In the outline of the history of the Northern Kingdom and the fall of Samaria, we have already compared the Bible account with the detailed record translated from the inscriptions found on the palace walls of the conquering Assyrian king. This example is one of the best illustrations of the close connection between the study of the Bible and the contemporary discoveries.

At the feast of Belshazzar in Babylon the king and all his guests were assembled the same night in which the city was taken by the Medes and the Persians. "In the same hour came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."<sup>3</sup> This hand-

<sup>3</sup> Dan. v. 5.

writing on the wall was interpreted by Daniel as meaning that "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and brought it to an end. Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." <sup>4</sup> In studying this account from the book of Daniel, scholars were at a loss to account for this Belshazzar and had about made up their minds that he was a legendary character. In 1853, however, a Babylonian inscription was found in the ruins of Ur of the Chaldees on a clay cylinder. It mentions Belshazzar, and we have found from these records something of his history and have proved that, according to history, the Bible records the name of an actual personage. We readily see from such instances that one result of this scientific study is to place the Bible on the same firm basis as other bodies of historical literature. What has misled us all is our habit of making the Bible and so-called religion a thing apart from our lives.

Many other illustrations might be given of the value of the spade to history, both general and Biblical, but their recital would require a book by itself. These are but a taste of the pleasure and profit assured in this line of study.

To show the value of archeology in connection with Bible study, the opinion of S. R. Driver, frequently quoted, might be given:

The fact is, while archaeology has frequently corroborated Biblical statements, of the truth of

<sup>4</sup> Dan. v. 25.

which *critics never doubted*, such as Shishak's invasion of Judah, the existence of kings such as Omri, Ahab, Jehu, and Sargon, and Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, it has overthrown no conclusion at variance with tradition which has met with the general acceptance of critics: the cases in which it has alleged to have done so will be found, if examined, to depend simply on a misapprehension of the facts, either the argument or conclusion, which has been overthrown by archaeology has not been used or held by critics, or if it has been used or held by critics, it has not in reality been overthrown by archaeology.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Introduction to The Literature of the Old Testament*, Preface, p. 31; see also pp. 3 and 4.





PART II

THE NEW TESTAMENT



## CHAPTER IX

### BACKGROUND OF THE NEW TESTAMENT DISCOVERIES OF OSTRACA AND PAPYRI

In the study of the making of the Old Testament we have noticed, speaking reverently, how God works in a logical way which we call law. He carries out His purposes, taking advantage of natural means, using as His instruments men inspired<sup>1</sup> by their capacity to understand God and by living in such close union with Him that they can interpret His will clearly.

Why were the Jews called God's chosen people? Why was the promise given to Abraham that in his seed all the nations should be blessed? It was not because Jewish humanity was better primarily than universal humanity, but because the Jews as a nation had a particular aptitude for religion. Many people have a special genius for mathematics, for history, or what not. Sooner or later, a few will show this particular gift so strongly as to stand out ahead of the others, like Edison, Marconi, Henry Ford, or a great poet or historian. Nations are composed of individuals and show the same characteristics as individuals. The old Romans are said to have had a genius for law, the Greeks for art, the Jews for religion. Necessarily, then,

<sup>1</sup> Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 (d).

the Jewish nation was the nation by whom the religion of the one God and the sacred literature concerning His dealings with the Jews would be preserved. The growth of the Old Testament was a natural one, being, like all literature, unintentional and unconscious in the making. Life came first; then literature as the expression of life.

The history of any nation's literature begins in oral tradition and gradually, very slowly in ancient times, advances to a written literature. The language used in this written literature is, of course, the language known and spoken by the people, and the source is the life of the people.

For New Testament literature, fortunately, there is a good background, clearly defined by means of ancient history and by the science of archeology. This science has illuminated the life of the first three centuries of the Christian era as well as that of the two or three preceding centuries, and has made a dead civilization take on color and life.

In a previous chapter, comment has been made upon the historical value of the hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions, found sometimes by accident or by the excavation of long-buried cities. Records of this kind, however, dealt with great public affairs and with the life of the higher class—kings, great generals, and other prominent men. The life of the middle class was seldom narrated, and that of the lowest class, the poor, almost never. But the discovery in Egypt in the Nile valley of two other kinds of records—those on ostraca and those on papyri—have thrown a flood of light on the common everyday life of the poorer class and

on that of the middle class as well. In early days in Egypt it was the custom, as it is at present with us, to dump rubbish outside the town, and in this way great mounds of refuse were heaped up, which in the course of time were covered by the fine drifting sand. As the climate of Egypt in this particular section is very dry, the sand would preserve any written records buried. This is just what did happen. Turning over these old, long-buried mounds, research students and men engaged in the big engineering enterprises of the present day have unearthed literary treasures. One kind written on potsherds, broken pieces of pottery, thrown on rubbish heaps, is called the ostraca. Every one, no matter how poor, could pick up a piece of broken crockery and use it as material on which to write if need or inclination prompted him. In fact, on these potshreds are inscriptions which, translated, tell in what the poor man of Egypt was interested during the first century of the Christian era. From these we can reconstruct the life of the mass of the people and learn what we are particularly interested in at present—their attitude toward Christianity. There are many potsherds covered with texts which are not in our Gospels; and others, containing letters of the Christians at that time, illustrate their conception of Christianity and the condition of the Christian Church in Egypt. These ostraca furnish, then, a source not only for the general history of that period and class of society, but also for the inner life of Christianity in that part of the world. We have only just begun to study even what has been already found in these two historical sources—the ostraca and papyri—but in the

future many more records of these kinds may be translated and others found which will be of incalculable value in Bible study.

Amusing stories are told in connection with the work of turning up these heaps of rubbish, long buried. Many of these priceless discoveries have been due to fortunate chance, for instance, the digging up of a mummified crocodile. The Egyptians often deified certain animals, such as cats, monkeys, bulls, and crocodiles, and at their death mummified them, wrapping them up in cartons of papyrus and burying them. In this case the spot searched happened to be a cemetery of crocodiles, or the "City of Crocodiles." A workman, disgusted at digging up crocodile after crocodile when he was looking for a bit of valuable papyrus or something else precious, finally lost his temper and smashed a crocodile into pieces, unexpectedly finding it crammed full with papyri. Sometimes, too, on the cartons of papyrus in which the animals were wrapped were inscribed valuable writings. The native workmen now know the value of these sheets of papyri and, hoping to find them intact, dig very carefully. At the beginning of the expedition of Dr. Francis W. Kelsey of the University of Michigan and Dr. Bernard P. Grenfell of Oxford University, this care was very noticeable, it is said. Natives who had worked with Grenfell and Hunt over twenty years before could be distinguished from the others by the care with which they handled their spades and deposited the rubbish removed, not knowing but there might be ostraca or precious papyri in the heaps.



According to scholars, some of the papyri found date back to very ancient times. The oldest one known at present, an Egyptian hieroglyphic, is estimated to be as old as B. C. 2600. Such records, of course, are priceless to historical students and Egyptologists, but we turn here to those bearing especially on New Testament history.

Very much of this knowledge has been gained by the translation of Greek papyri, brought to light mainly by the explorations of Grenfell and Hunt, both fellows of Oxford College. In 1897, while working at Oxyrhynchus, in the valley of the Nile, they made the discovery of a number of these Greek papyri, including records of the three centuries before Christ and also many belonging to the first centuries A. D. For the present topic it is the latter which are of interest and importance. They contain literature of many kinds—from prayers and sayings of Christ and even the fragment of a gospel unknown before, to formulas of magic; from letters, giving graphic touches of intimate family life, to official documents—in fact, literature revealing the civilization and varied life of the first Christian centuries. The knowledge gained thus, translated, is of the utmost importance in the study of the New Testament. As one scholar has well said, it has, in fact, revolutionized this study in several branches of the work. First, scholars find that the Greek in which the New Testament was originally written was not the classical Greek but the colloquial Greek used by the mass of the common people of that day and in that section of the world. The influence of

this discovery is affecting twentieth-century versions of the Bible, as shown by the translation of the New Testament by Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed in 1923. Second, these papyri are a help in getting more accurate dates in New Testament history. In this connection we may speak of the evangelist Luke. His accuracy as an historian had been questioned and doubted because of his statement fixing the time at which Christ was born; but these records have verified his statements and proved his accuracy. Third, they give a clear idea of social conditions at that time, by reference to the questions that were full of practical interest to the people—slavery, for instance. Fourth, they reveal the education of these first centuries, showing that both reading and writing were known by the common people, that a system of shorthand writing was practiced, and that sometimes an amanuensis was employed. Fifth, they bring out the unrest of the times, particularly the religious unrest. These and other points are to be learned from the translation of the papyri. The point, however, that makes them of particular importance to Bible students is the Logia, or Sayings of Jesus, one set of which was discovered in 1897, and another in 1903, by Grenfell and Hunt. In a collection of Greek papyri, dug out of the mounds of Behnesa, a ruin in the desert about 120 miles south of Cairo, Egypt, are several sayings of Jesus not recorded in this identical form in our Gospels, although the spirit animating them is that of Christ. There were eight of these fragments found in 1897. In order to illustrate and offer an opportunity for comparison with

the Gospels, we quote from the translation by Grenfell and Hunt.<sup>2</sup> In the quotations, the dots indicate words missing, and that within the marks of parentheses the words supplied by the translators:

1. . . . and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.<sup>3</sup>

2. Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God; and except ye make the Sabbath a real Sabbath, ye shall not see the Father.

3. Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart and see not. . . .

4. . . . poverty.

5. Jesus saith, Wherever there are (two), they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there shalt thou find me; cleave the wood, and there am I.<sup>4</sup>

6. Jesus saith, A prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither does a physician work cures upon them that know him.<sup>5</sup>

7. Jesus saith, A city that is built upon the top of a high hill and stablished, can neither fall nor be hid.

8. Jesus saith, Thou hearest with one ear (but the other thou hast closed).

<sup>2</sup> Grenfell and Hunt, *Sayings of Our Lord*, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> Luke vi. 42; Matt. vii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xviii. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Luke iv. 24; Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4.

These we see are comparatively complete, except the fourth one which lacks all except the last word "poverty."

The second discovery,<sup>6</sup> made in 1903, at the same place, gives a second set of sayings. The papyrus is mutilated and consequently is difficult or impossible to translate. Besides the introduction there are parts of five separate sayings which have been translated by Grenfell and Hunt thus. The parts within the parentheses indicate how the translator filled out the missing parts, the dots indicate the missing words:

Introduction: These are the (wonderful) words which Jesus the living (Lord) spake to . . . and Thomas, and he said unto (them), every one that hearkens to these words shall never taste of death.

1. Jesus saith, Let not him who seeks . . . cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished he shall reach the kingdom, and having reached the kingdom he shall rest.

2. Jesus saith, (Ye ask? who are those) that draw us (to the kingdom, if) the kingdom is in Heaven? . . . the fowls of the air, and all beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea (these are they which draw) you, and the kingdom of Heaven is within you; and whoever shall know himself shall find it (Strive therefore?) to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the (almighty?) Father; (and?) ye shall know that ye are in (the city of God?), and ye are (the city?).

3. Jesus saith, A man shall not hesitate . . .

<sup>6</sup>Grenfell and Hunt, *New Sayings of Jesus*, 1904.

to ask . . . concerning his place (in the kingdom. Ye shall know) that many that are first shall be last and the last first and (they shall have eternal life?).

4. Jesus saith, Everything that is not before thy face and that which is hidden from thee shall be revealed to thee. For there is nothing hidden which shall not be made manifest, nor buried which shall not be raised.

5. His disciples question him and say, How shall we fast and how shall we (pray?) . . . and what (commandment) shall we keep . . . Jesus saith, . . . do not . . . of truth . . . blessed is he . . .

The last saying is different from the others because it implies a previous section giving the occasion of the questions asked by the disciples.

With these sayings were found also fragments of a papyrus roll reading like a gospel. Grenfell and Hunt restore it as follows:

(Take no thought) from morning until even nor from evening until morning, either for your food, what ye shall eat—or for your raiment, what ye shall put on. Ye are far better than the lilies which grow but spin not. Having one garment, what do ye (lack?). . . . Who could add to your stature? He himself will give you your garment. His disciples say unto him: When wilt thou be manifested to us, and when shall we see thee? He saith: When ye shall be stripped and not be ashamed. . . . He said, the key of knowledge ye hid; ye entered not in yourselves and to them that were entering in ye opened not.



This reads as if some one had jotted down what he wished to remember for his own use or to tell others. Perhaps he himself had heard Christ utter these words or their meaning, at one of the three great Passover feasts of Christ's ministry. At that time Jews came to Jerusalem from all parts of the world. Again, he may have written for his own future use and that of his Egyptian friends what some one told him Christ said. However it was done, we love to think of these converts treasuring the words of Christ, carrying them to their homes, where Englishmen found them in our own century. According to tradition among the Church Fathers, there was a Gospel according to the Egyptians, and perhaps these fragments are from that. These, then, are illustrations of the Logia, or Sayings of Jesus. The Gospel in Aramaic, said to have been written by Matthew, may have consisted of a collection of sayings and discourses such as these. Material was abundant. John in the last verse of his Gospel wrote: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

The disputed point about these Logia is their date. Many think they did not exist, in their present form at least, during the first century. Grenfell and Hunt think their date about A. D. 200, or possibly A. D. 140, not later certainly than A. D. 300. But whether or not these papyri, in the form found, belong to the first century or later, whether or not they are to be depended upon for textual criticism, they prove how



the people of the first centuries reacted to the new religion and how widespread Christianity became within a short period of time.

These Logia, or Sayings of Jesus, are classified with what are called the Unwritten Sayings, or the Agrapha. By this term is meant the Sayings of Christ that came down in the oral tradition of the Church and are not found in the true text of the canonical Gospels.

These Unwritten Sayings are divided into five classes: (1) Those quoted in the New Testament, of which there are two varieties—(a) those found in some manuscripts of the Gospels and (b) those found in the New Testament, outside of the Gospels; (2) those found in the apocryphal gospels; (3) those used in the writings of the Church Fathers; (4) many found in the Mohammedan writings; (5) and those found on the Oxyrhynchus papyri. All of these Agrapha or Unwritten Sayings of Jesus together with the history and literature of the time—Biblical or secular—are a valuable background for the Gospels.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GOSPELS

Although less than two thousand years have passed since the advent of Christ, yet the sources of the New Testament are like that of the Old—rooted in oral tradition. What Christ said and did may have been jotted down on ostraca or papyri that it might be remembered and told to others. This method and oral repetition were the means unconsciously employed by Christians to keep in mind Christ's deeds and words, before the four canonical Gospels were written.

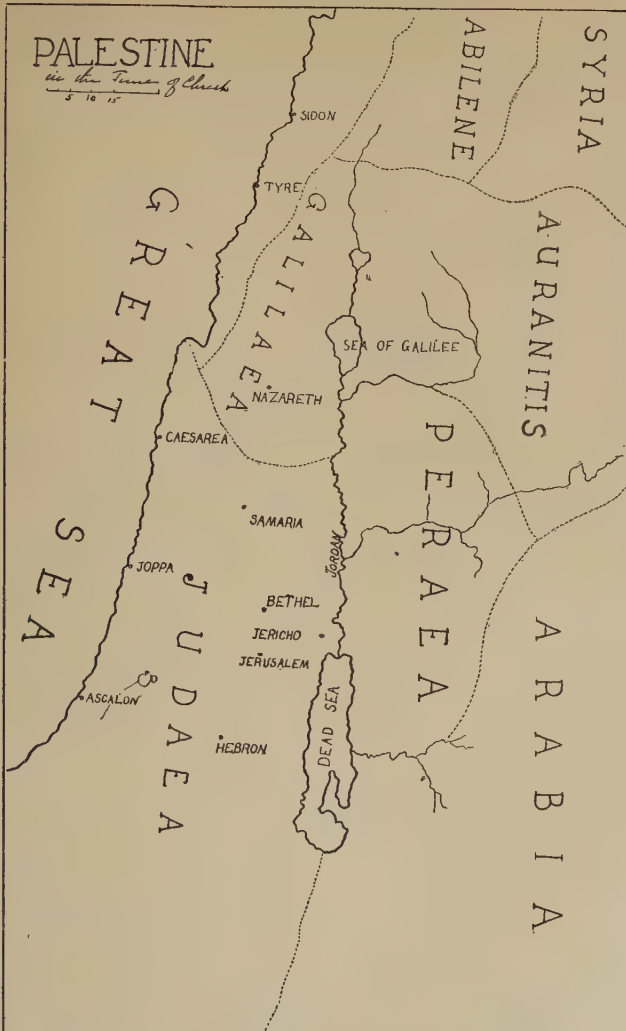
Like the Old Testament, the books of the New Testament in the canonical list are not arranged chronologically. To the question which books in the New Testament were written first, many, no doubt, would answer the Gospels; but no, the Epistles were committed to writing first and for logical reasons. They were the letters of the great missionaries who had founded or visited the early Christian churches and were written for the encouragement, instruction, and warning of these converts to Christianity.

Turning to the Gospels, the natural query is, Why did the Christians depend for a generation on telling and retelling the story of Christ? Why not have committed this oral gospel to writing long before?

# PALESTINE

*in the Time of Christ*

5 10 15





Several reasons have been given. Many would answer at once, because the twelve disciples had not the education necessary. That can hardly be the case. They were successful business men and no doubt could have written what their hearts overflowed with. Besides, we see from the ostraca and papyri how widespread and common the art of reading and writing was in the first centuries. Their whole training was oral, however; books were not their natural mode of expression. Then, too, the making of the Old Testament was, as we have seen, unintentional and unconscious at first, like the making of any great literature; therefore, it would not be natural to write such a book from set purpose unless absolute necessity demanded it. Their hearts were full of love for this wonderful Jesus. They had lived and talked with him for the three years of his ministry. They had heard his words, seen his miracles, his crucifixion, his death, his ascension. All this was a gospel written in their hearts. Meeting one another they discussed what their hearts were full of—His life and especially His last command, “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation.”<sup>1</sup> They had to be very busy and active to obey this injunction. When they gathered at their meetings, they were full of the meaning to the world of Christ’s life and death. From the testimony of the early Christian Fathers we learn the general tenor of their church services. Though perhaps not always in the same order, the service consisted of four parts: a prayer, the Lord’s prayer, generally, though some-

<sup>1</sup> Mark xvi. 15.

times a liturgical prayer; reading with comment from some part of the Old Testament, which they called divine teaching; discussing some part of the life of Christ or His teachings, called human teaching; and partaking of the Lord's supper. By means of these services everything concerning Christ would be told and retold until all Christians would be as familiar with these facts as the ancient Jews were with their great traditions. Thus "human teaching" became in time what to-day is called the Oral Gospels, becoming finally as stereotyped as if written. Therefore, the *usage* of the early Church at their meetings had very much to do with fixing the Christ story firmly in memory, although it was not yet committed formally to writing.

Another reason for not writing the Gospels can be inferred from the term "human teaching" used by these Christians. They thought their Holy Scriptures complete in the Old Testament. It was their sacred book, acknowledged and referred to again and again and quoted as authority by Christ Himself.

But probably the greatest reason why they did not at once write the words and acts of Christ was that they expected Him to return very soon—to-day, to-morrow, any day, any hour. In this case their last thought would be the necessity of writing a book. Why should they when He Himself was expected at any time?

But years went by and still Christ's second coming was delayed. Like wise men, these followers of Christ, knowing the value of the testimony of eye-witnesses,



decided to have His life and teachings written. It was fully a generation, however, before the written Gospels appeared. Probably the fact that the churches were so widely scattered throughout the world also influenced them to write this history, as a book could carry where they could not usually go in person.

The four Gospels, written after the Epistles, were based upon the Oral Gospels and the Logia which had kept alive through a generation Christ's life and teaching. Before the canonical list of the four given in our Bible there were doubtless many other gospels written in whole or part; for instance, the source of the fragmentary gospel inscribed on the Greek papyri found by Grenfell and Hunt may be such a one. This may be inferred, too, from the preface to Luke's Gospel: "Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning these matters . . . it seemed good to me also. . . ." <sup>2</sup> Then there is the tradition of another gospel written in Aramaic by Matthew before our present Greek Gospel of Matthew was written. To such a gospel, while never yet found, allusions and references are made by the Christian Fathers, and it is likely the tradition of its existence is well authenticated.

The first in the list of the four Gospels is Matthew, but chronologically Mark's Gospel was the first written. As the object in the present text is not to study the contents of the Bible, but how it was made, we shall merely glance at the main points in the history of each, that we may fix them in memory.

<sup>2</sup> Luke i. 1, 2.

What is known of the author of this first written Gospel in the New Testament canon? In answer, we turn to the Bible<sup>3</sup> and learn these facts. His name was John Mark. He was the son of Mary at whose house the Christians often gathered together for prayer and worship—the place where Peter went after his deliverance from prison. Later, when Paul and Barnabas started on their first missionary tour from Antioch, they took John Mark with them. For some reason, he left them after they had reached Perga. Perhaps he considered the great perils before them and, weak-hearted, thought he could serve God better and longer by returning to Jerusalem. This is the most charitable explanation, but Paul condemned his action as not manly as well as not Christian and criticized him severely because he had put his hand to the plough and looked back. From the last reference given we are glad to note that Mark redeemed himself in the eyes of Paul even. Tradition, not the Bible, says that Mark knew Christ, which would be very likely as Mary, his mother, seems to have been an active, influential member of Christ's followers. In fact, he may have been the young man who followed Christ from the garden but, laid hold of by the captors of Christ, fled, leaving his linen cloth behind him.<sup>4</sup> From the Bible we infer that he had at least a personal knowledge of Christ, probably knew Him well, and also was acquainted with the eye-witnesses of Christ's ministry. He was a Jew, and because of that fact

<sup>3</sup> Acts xii. 12, 25, xiii. 5, 13, xv. 36 f.; Col. iv. 10; II Tim. iv. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xiv. 51, 52.

was trained in the knowledge of the Old Testament Scripture and able to appreciate the Jewish point of view.

Although not one of the twelve, yet he was a man who had as the source of his material first-hand testimony from eye-witnesses and a personal knowledge, probably, of Christ. He would have been familiar with the Logia, or Sayings of Christ, going about from band to band of Christians, and would also know the Oral Gospels. Possibly also he may have known the Aramaic Gospel by Matthew. But his chief source of material was the apostle Peter, one of the inner circle of the twelve. It is well authenticated that Mark was a companion of Peter, as the latter went from one meeting of Christians to another, telling them the wonderful life and words of Christ. Peter spoke at these services on whatever topic the Christians present called for. Mark, accompanying him, heard what was said and after a while, in response to the wishes of the people, wrote down these sermons or talks and incorporated them afterwards into his Gospel. At any rate, scholars find a marked similarity between Mark's style and that of Peter in the discourse of the latter to the centurion Cornelius and his household, given in Acts.<sup>5</sup> But Mark was more than a compiler. He was doubtless an eye-witness of many of these things.

The Gospel of Mark is a narrative of fact, starting with the beginning of Christ's ministry, and is intended for Roman Christians; it emphasizes particularly the

<sup>5</sup> Acts x. 9-48.

point that Jesus was the Son of God. A great characteristic of the style is what we should expect from Peter—strength secured by force and directness and but little detail. This Gospel is said to have been written in Greek and on a papyrus roll about twenty feet long. Papyrus was very brittle and therefore easily broken off as the roll was passed from church to church; it finally did break off after the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter. The remaining verses, beginning with the ninth, were simply put there to fill out the space known to have existed. Their absence from the old manuscripts proves this. Without any study, I think we can see readily the abruptness between the two parts of the chapter. The date of Mark's Gospel is uncertain but probably was about A. D. 70, before the fall of Jerusalem, at least a generation after Christ's death. It is helpful to notice that, even so late as the Christian era, dates are somewhat uncertain, and though not so doubtful as in the times of Hammurabi, still doubtful enough to show how natural varying dates are even in the Christian era.

The second Gospel bears the name of Matthew, one of the twelve disciples. He, as well as Mark, was a Jew and had all the Jewish traditions as well as the knowledge of the sacred Scriptures behind him. His close intimacy with Christ during the three years of his ministry would make him a good authority. His testimony would be that of any eye-witness. We learn from the Bible that his name was Matthew, or Levi, the son of Alpheus; that he was a tax collector for the

Romans; and that when called by Christ he arose at once and followed Him.<sup>6</sup>

As has been said before, from references in the early Christian Fathers Matthew is supposed to have written a gospel in the Aramaic even before Mark's Gospel. This Aramaic gospel consisted of the discourses of Jesus and is now known only by reference to it. It seems to have been lost early like the lost books of the Old Testament. Tradition tells us something of its history, which is interesting even if it cannot be proved. Matthew certainly would have sources from which to draw for the Greek Gospel Matthew. He was an apostle, one of the twelve, was with Christ constantly during the three years of His ministry, and was very intimate with the other disciples, also eye-witnesses. He had, too, the Gospel by Mark as one source; and, if he wrote this Aramaic Gospel first, would draw upon that largely; and he also knew the Oral Gospels. Hence it was very natural for the early Church to ascribe the Gospel Matthew to that disciple; but one strong argument against this belief is that this Gospel does not read like the testimony of an eye-witness. The arguments for and against John as the author of the Gospel John are about evenly divided, but the probability that the disciple John was the author is increased by the fact that this Gospel

<sup>6</sup> While it is not within the scope of the present work to discuss questions of disputed authorship, yet we should know, perhaps, that modern scholarship has decided that the Gospel called Matthew was not written by the disciple of that name, although it was credited to him for centuries by the Church. We can readily see the reason for this belief of the early Christians.



very decidedly reads like the testimony of an eye-witness.

But whatever the decision about the author, the writer seems to have been writing for Jewish Christians especially, and knowing their traditions and beliefs, he began with the genealogy of Christ. His object was to prove that this Jesus who had been crucified was the fulfillment of the prophecy of a Messiah iterated long ago to the Jewish nation. Mark emphasizes Jesus as the Son of God; Matthew emphasizes Jesus as the promised Messiah. This was his specific aim, but the general aim of all the Gospels was not to teach doctrine but to impress upon men that they must obey all Jesus' commandments.

The third Gospel was that of Luke. He was not one of the twelve, not an eye-witness, nor even a Jew. This Gentile, perhaps a slave as a child or a son of slaves, awakens our curiosity and hearty interest at once. What can we find in the Bible concerning him? There is plenty in tradition. He seems to have been one of the favorites in the old stories told by the early Church. But what do we find in Bible history? From references <sup>7</sup> we see first his decision to write the Gospel as many others had done, because he, too, "had a personal understanding of all things from the first"; and also that, having written the Gospel of Luke, he wrote later the Acts of the Apostles. From Acts we see he was a companion of Paul on his journeys. Probably he was with him throughout, but we know that he was present during the events told in the last half

<sup>7</sup> Luke i. 1-4; Acts i. 1 f.; Col. iv. 14; II Tim. iv. 11; Phil. i. 24.



of Acts because he writes in the first person as a contemporary. We learn, too, that he was the "beloved physician" and the companion of Paul in his imprisonment.

Being a Gentile and not brought up with the background of Jewish tradition, and never having even seen, heard, or known Christ in the flesh, how was Luke fitted to tell the Christ story? He was a scholar and his Gospel is a very scholarly document; his style is a finished, literary one. Then, too, he is a historian rather than a narrator, inquiring into the causes of events and tracing motives and actions to their legitimate results. Another point in his favor was that, being free from the Jewish ideas, prejudices, expectations, and even their narrowness, he might present the truth more emphatically and forcefully for these very reasons. He is like the one outside of the game, knowing it well and thus seeing the best move to make. So one not a Jew might better sift evidence and come to conclusions unbiased by personal sympathy or inherited knowledge. As a Gentile, then, he might be well fitted to write the truth provided he could get at sources. What sources had he? He had the Oral Gospel, the Logia, perhaps Matthew's Aramaic Gospel, and the two Greek Gospels, Mark and Matthew, and probably others for he writes, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand . . ." He knew intimately also many of the eye-witnesses of Christ's life and really seems to have known eye-witnesses who were very close to Christ, yet not referred to by the other evangelists. For instance, a great English scholar has sug-

gested that perhaps he heard from Mary, the mother of Jesus, the beautiful story of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night and the glorious Christmas message, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, good will toward men." He himself speaks of his "personal understanding" of these things and he had abundant opportunity to see and question eye-witnesses and judge their trustworthiness. But besides all this material, he had Paul, the great Gentile apostle, as his main source. As Mark owes much in his Gospel to Peter, so Luke owes much to Paul. Luke's method of writing, too, was that of a scholarly chronicler. He collected material, compared and verified it, sifted it carefully and, like a philosophical historian, inquired into causes and motives. The result is his masterly Gospel.

Mark shows Jesus as the Son of God; Matthew as the promised Messiah; but the Gentile Luke not only does this but emphasizes the fact that he is the Son of Man as well. He records many parables stressing God's love for all humanity—Jew and Gentile. He is the only evangelist, for example, who relates the parable of the Prodigal Son <sup>8</sup> and that of the Good Samaritan.<sup>9</sup> Those of us who are Gentiles appreciate how unusual was Luke's breadth of view.

Before leaving this subject, we might add that Luke evidently regarded his Gospel and the book of Acts as two divisions of the same history. The Gospel is a treatise on Christ's life and teachings. The book

<sup>8</sup> Luke xv. 11-32.

<sup>9</sup> Luke x. 30-35.

of Acts shows the results of His spirit animating the apostles in their founding of the churches.

The Gospel of John, written last and about the end of the first century, was the fourth canonical Gospel. If, as has been generally supposed, the apostle John wrote the Gospel, he was a Jew, an important member of the intimate circle of three among the twelve disciples, and, moreover, the disciple best loved by Christ—"The Beloved Disciple."

From the Bible,<sup>10</sup> we find that his father was Zebedee, a prosperous fisherman, having hired servants. Comparing two references,<sup>11</sup> we think his mother was Salome, a sister of Mary, mother of Jesus, for Jesus committed Mary, His mother, to the care of the disciple John at His death. John was also one of the three with Christ on three<sup>12</sup> very important occasions: at the raising of Jairus' daughter; at the Transfiguration of Christ; and in the Garden at Gethsemane he was one of the three close to Him. Something of his character and zeal in Christ's service is indicated by Mark.<sup>13</sup> Here Christ surnames the brothers James and John as Boanerges, or the sons of Thunder. Further, we learn that these two brothers or their mother, or all of them, had an ambition to be first in Christ's kingdom.<sup>14</sup> In another place we find the mistaken idea of the disciples concerning John, namely, that he should not die.<sup>15</sup> This belief, together with the mys-

<sup>10</sup> Mark i. 19-20; Matt. iv. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Mark xv. 40 with John xix. 25-27.

<sup>12</sup> Mark v. 37; Luke ix. 28; Mark xiv. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Mark iii. 37.

<sup>14</sup> Mark x. 35-37.

<sup>15</sup> John xxi. 20-23.

tery surrounding John's death, gave rise to many traditions among the early Christians. "A Death in the Desert," a poem by Browning, is based on this supposition.

The Gospel of John was written toward the end of the century, as has been said, when St. John was a very old man. In addition to being a Jew and the best loved of the twelve disciples, he had a greater store than the other evangelists from which to draw material. Besides the Oral Gospels, the Logia, the three synoptic Gospels, the history of the church as given in Acts, he had, too, a practical knowledge of the founding of the different churches throughout the world—their struggles, dangers, questions, and causes of failure or success. Then, too, looking back upon the whole history, he could understand the proper relations of things to one another and their significance in the life of the Christian church and judge more accurately what Christ's purpose was. He could see what the others had omitted that would strengthen or encourage the people, and he tried to give that in this last Gospel. While he did narrate the chief facts in Christ's life, he told them not so much because they were facts, but perhaps to illustrate what Christ's life and death meant to the world. His Gospel is more of a meditative philosophy, more spiritual than the others. He seems to see plainly the central truth of Christianity—Love—God's great love for humanity and the purpose of Christ's earthly life.

The first three Gospels are called the synoptic Gospels because they deal with the same topics in Christ's

life and teachings, giving the same details in subject matter, and even their style is similar. Perhaps the oral teaching of the early church accounts for the likeness in these Gospels.

The four books—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the four narratives of Christ's life on earth. It may be said that they correspond to the four narratives of the Old Testament, the J, E, D, and P Documents, making the story of the children of Israel until the end of the Exile.

These Gospels, written a generation after Christ's death, had as their sources the testimony of eye-witnesses as given in the Oral Gospels; all the material, oral and written, that came before each successive Gospel; and, finally, the belief and faith of the early Christians based on this testimony.

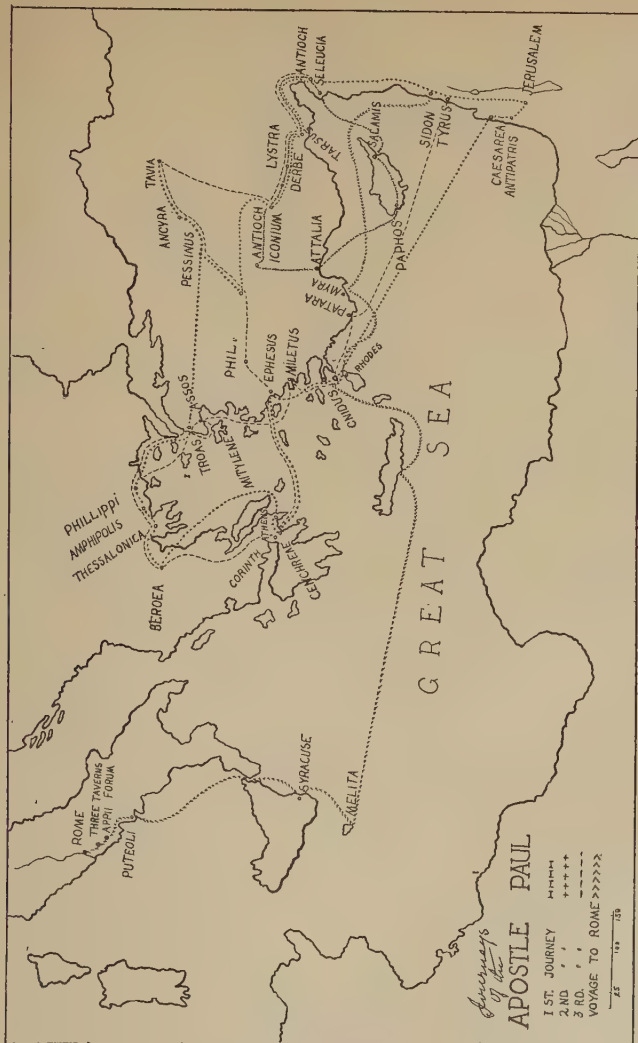
## CHAPTER XI

### THE EPISTLES: THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS: THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

From the Bible and the sources noted, the background of the first centuries of the Christian era is well known. We see the varied interests; the life, domestic and social; the different religious ideas of the people; the great issues of their life under Roman power; the educational and cosmopolitan nature of the world in which the early church was established; and especially the great difference in the background and training of the Jews and Gentiles and the resulting varied opinions that would prevail among these two peoples, even after their conversion and union into one Christian church. One of the biggest questions centered in the old Jewish rites and ceremonies. Were the converted Gentiles to conform to these laws? Another point of difficulty was the controversy about eating meat offered to idols. From the Epistles <sup>1</sup> we get an idea of the importance attached to this. Besides the ordinary difficulties threatening the unity of any church, the early Christian church had this situation to meet. One object of the Epistles was to give counsel in cases arising out of these differing opinions

<sup>1</sup> I Cor. viii.







and to avert the serious difficulties which threatened their life.

Because of the exigency of the case the Epistles were first written and gradually grew out of the needs of the churches of that day. Paul, the great missionary, traveled over the world, everywhere preaching Christ and His resurrection. He followed Christ's plan, preaching first in the synagogues, and, when the Jews rejected him, turning to the Gentiles, awakening and converting them. As a result, churches were founded in many heathen cities. After Paul left, in the nature of things, questions began to arise. Who could answer these better, in their opinion, than the founder of the church? Consequently the Christians would send word to Paul or some other missionary teacher, asking for answers to questions vital to them. We have to remember that these missionary churches were for the most part composed of converts from the Gentiles with but a sprinkling of Jews. The background of each race was so different that it was hard to bring the two elements together. Even the converted Jews were human and found it hard to give up old traditions, for instance, those concerning circumcision and meat offered to idols; while the converted Gentiles, too, were human and thought all this inherited Jewish tradition unnecessary and even foolish. Consequently an appeal would be made to Paul or some other apostle who had founded the church. Another great truth which it was hard for the Corinthians as well as other Greeks to understand was the fact of the Resurrection. This is the reason why Paul

devotes so much time to illustrating this doctrine. When appeals for decisions were called for by the churches, the apostle, sometimes consulting the brethren or the church in general as far as possible, answered these questions in detail. On the other hand, Paul, deeply interested in any young church that he had founded and anxious for its spiritual progress, would write congratulating, warning, or exhorting them. The general aim of the Epistles was to reiterate and to interpret the teachings of Christ so that the churches might grow spiritually. The Pauline Epistles may be divided into two classes—the doctrinal and the practical—both intended for the edification of the churches.

The Epistles as a whole were of two kinds: the Pauline, written by Paul to the churches in which he was particularly interested; and the Catholic, or General Epistles, addressed to the church in general, not to any particular church. Paul's letters were named after the church addressed; for instance, Corinthians to the church of Corinth; Thessalonians to the church of Thessalonica. The Catholic Epistles took their name from their author—Peter, James, or John, as the case might be. To be sure, there is some doubt about the authorship of certain Epistles in each class, for instance, Hebrews in the Pauline class and Second Peter in the General Epistles.

If we turn to the New Testament<sup>1</sup> we see the use made of the Epistles. "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the

<sup>1</sup> Col. iv. 16.

church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea." Again, "I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren."<sup>2</sup>

They were read first, as in the case of the Colossians, by the church to whom addressed, doubtless read again and again, and probably in part at least committed to memory, copied in whole or in part, and then sent on to the next church. In this way most of the churches would become familiar with the contents of these letters. By this method, too, these Epistles, generally written on papyrus, which is very brittle, would in time be "read to pieces," as we say, and then Christians would have to depend on their memories or perhaps on the memory of something told them or on copies of the original letter, first copy, second, or some later copy, as it happened. It is not strange, therefore, that there are discrepancies and variations in some of the ancient manuscripts. This is, in fact, just what is to be expected. We may easily test this statement. How many can repeat exactly what is told even when trying to repeat correctly? The game "Rumor," where the first one whispers something to the second, and so on down through a line of say twenty, illustrates this. Ask the twentieth one what he heard and perhaps there will not be a word in it like the sentence first given. The same thing is noticeable in copying a manuscript. The first copy of a letter might be exact, which would be doubtful, but what about the copy of a copy, and so on? There were no printing presses and no mail, except by special

<sup>2</sup>1 Thess. v. 27.

messenger, so that letters might even wear out, though well taken care of, in the passing from one church to another; hence copies became necessary.

The names of the fourteen Pauline Epistles are:

Romans	Corinthians I & II
Galatians	Ephesians
Philippians	Colossians
Thessalonians I & II	Timothy I & II
Titus	Philemon
Hebrews (of doubtful authorship)	
Other Epistles as well as Hebrews are of doubtful authorship.	

Probably the Epistle to the Thessalonians was the first written by Paul, and he gives the reason for writing in the first chapter. We notice that Paul's Epistles are of two sorts—those written to the particular church named, and the personal ones, like the two to Timothy. That to Philemon is one chapter only and is on the subject of slavery—a topic of which a great deal was written on the papyri recently found.

The Catholic Epistles, seven in number, written to the church universal are:

James  
 Peter I & II  
 John I, II, III  
 Jude

The book of Revelation might be put here for the sake of convenience, as it is generally ascribed to the apostle John and is addressed to the church in



general. It is, though, different from the other books, being an apocalypse, like the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. Like Daniel, the parent book of apocalyptic literature, it is somewhat akin to prophecy and employs the strange symbols—beasts, birds, and fishes, which the Hebrews had learned from the Babylonians during the Exile. In the motion picture, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," we get an idea of this kind of symbolism grafted on the Jewish style, which itself was figurative—full of metaphors, parables, and allegories.

Two of the Catholic epistles may be noticed also because of subject matter. The Epistle of James is one of the Wisdom books of the Bible; and that of Jude quotes by name one of the non-canonical books, Enoch,<sup>3</sup> and alludes to another.

The dates of the Epistles are uncertain. Probably I Thessalonians was the first written. Its date is thought to be about A. D. 52, or at least between A. D. 50 and 54.

The other canonical book of the Bible is Acts, the history of the founding and the struggles of the early church. It was written by Luke and intended by him to form a part of his Gospel, showing how well the apostles obeyed Christ's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

The Old Testament had, as we saw in the Septuagint, the Apocrypha or the non-canonical books. The New Testament also has apocryphal books, called ecclesiastical or non-canonical, just as they were

<sup>3</sup> Jude i. 14.

named in the Old Testament list. The churches, like the Jews of old, thought that some of these books were good for reading in the churches or in the synagogues, but they were recognized as not equal to the others. We have said that the first three centuries were full of literary activity, and a great mass of books were being written upon Christ and the Church and its doctrines. Among these are some of the epistles of the Christian Fathers, written to the different churches, as Paul's were. These Christian Fathers, so-called because of their prominence in the Church, followed the apostles in point of time and carried on their Christian work. Many of them were practical Christians, wonderful scholars, and men of great executive ability. All were ready and some even anxious to give their lives for the truth of Christianity. Many of them did, in fact, become martyrs. Their teaching and work form the bridge in the history of the Church from the apostles to the ecclesiastical historians, like Eusebius. For instance, Polycarp, the pupil of John, the beloved disciple, makes a link between Christ and the Christian Fathers.

Some of these apocryphal books are very absurd and foolish, like the stories growing out of the desire to know what Jesus did as a boy. We all like to know such things and no doubt those early Christians in their anxiety to know everything about this Christ of theirs wrote these foolish stories. We find them in the books called the Gospel of Mary and the first and second Gospels of the Infancy of Jesus Christ. In fact, they are the source, if not the origin, of the

remarkable stories told in the "Lives of the Saints," "The Golden Legend," and the Mystery plays and pageants, represented in England during the Middle Ages. Some of the other books—in fact, most of them—are very good. Perhaps a careless reader—or even a careful one—would hardly distinguish between some of the non-canonical Epistles and the sacred Epistles. It seems as if the Christians must have been guided in their choice of books, because they omitted even such books as these epistles of the early Christian Fathers, like the Epistles of Clement and Polycarp. One remarkable thing about these non-canonical epistles is that, while recommended and read eagerly by the Church and even in the church services, these epistles were never regarded by the Church as equal to those of the apostles, nor did their authors so consider them. These apocryphal books of the New Testament are valuable as a source of collateral information. Some of them, like the Epistle of Barnabas, those of Clement to the Corinthians, and the Shepherd of Hermas, are found now and then in different old Bible manuscripts, though they were never placed in any version of the Bible—Catholic or Protestant, as canonical. The fact that we find one and another in the old manuscripts proves how well they were known, and that they had been considered as a part of the Bible before the New Testament canon was formed.

The Epistle of King Abgarus to Christ and the reply <sup>4</sup> are intensely interesting and were thought to

<sup>4</sup> Hone, *Apocryphal New Testament*.

be genuine by the historian Eusebius.<sup>5</sup> Whether genuine or not, the realistic touches are fine, and the spirit animating each is true to the suffering Abgarus and the loving, sympathizing Christ. We quote the two:

Abgarus, King of Edessa, to Jesus, the good Savior, who appears at Jerusalem, greeting.

2. I have been informed concerning you and your cures, which are performed without the use of medicine and herbs.

3. For it is reported, that you cause the blind to see, the lame to walk, do both cleanse lepers, and cast out unclean spirits and devils, and restore them to health who have been long diseased, and raisest up the dead.

4. All of which when I heard, I was persuaded of one of these two, viz., either that you are God Himself descended from heaven, who do these things, or the Son of God.

5. On this account, therefore, I have written to you, earnestly to desire you would take the trouble of a journey hither, and cure a disease I am under.

6. For I hear the Jews ridicule you, and intend you mischief.

7. My city is indeed small, but neat, and large enough for us both.

#### THE REPLY OF CHRIST

1. Abgarus, you are happy, forasmuch as you have believed on me, whom you have not seen.

2. For it is written concerning me, that those who have seen me should not believe on me,

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*.

that they who have not seen might believe and live.

3. As to that part of your letter, which relates to my giving you a visit, I must inform you, that I must fulfill all the ends of my mission in this country, and after that be received up again to him that sent me.

4. But after my ascension I will send one of my disciples, who will cure your disease, and give life to you and all that are with you.

Eusebius adds that after Christ's Ascension, the apostle Thaddeus visited the king and healed him in the name of Christ.

All these books, the apocryphal as well as the Epistles and Gospels, became very familiar to the early Church. They were sent from church to church, as we have seen, read in the services, preached upon, and doubtless read over and over again and in some cases copied privately. They would be the theme of conversation among the Christians. The result was a pretty fair knowledge of their contents. This would enable them to quote from most of them and even repeat parts of some, but the favorite books of all were naturally the four Gospels, telling the history and life of the wonderful Savior. To-day these are the favorites, too, and have been throughout the ages.

We have one literary record of the influence of the gospel story on the Syrian church, namely, a continuous story of the Gospels, dating about A. D. 160, taken from the four Gospels, omitting repetitions and endeavoring to be as accurate as possible, giving



Christ's life in chronological order. This was called the "Diatessaron" or the "Book of the Four," referring to its source, the four gospels.

As may be seen from the writing of the "Diatessaron," about A. D. 160, the Gospels spread over the world and soon became known to all the churches. In a lesser degree this was the case, too, with the Epistles. A list has been found in the Ambrosian Library at Milan which is called the Muratorian fragment. This is one of the earliest known lists of the New Testament books and is like our New Testament list but omits Hebrews and a few Catholic Epistles, and speaks of other books, doubtful as yet. This list is supposed to date from about A. D. 170.

About the end of the second century A. D. there was a widespread knowledge of all the literature of the New Testament, and during the third century it became more and more familiar to the churches throughout the world and more and more precious. The question before them was the gathering together and choosing of the books for the canon of the New Testament. In this selection the *usage* of the Church had great influence. It was through church usage that the books had become known to the Christians. Usage had made them precious to all, and, as the books were determined on in the main by the mass of the people, usage would have much to do with the choice.

In the history of the making of the Old Testament canon we noticed that the persecution by Antiochus in B. C. 168 made the Jews love their literature and gather



it and preserve it more zealously than ever. In the history of the Christian church the persecution by Diocletian in A. D. 303 had the same effect. These Christians loved their Savior and their precious books more than life itself. Consequently they would treasure all of the books that had reached them containing a record of Christ's life and sufferings and His promise to return once more to His people. Another circumstance gave an impulse to deciding which books should be put into the New Testament canon. This was what one writer has called a "big book order" for those days. Constantine, the Roman emperor, had been converted to Christianity and was very zealous in forcing it upon his subjects and advancing it in every way possible. He gave an order to the learned bishop Eusebius in A. D. 331 for fifty Bibles, to be made by the best scribes and to be written in the best style, upon the best of parchment. It is evident that in order to execute this commission Eusebius first had to make up his mind what books to put into the New Testament canon. The Old Testament canon, of course, was complete at the time of the Septuagint, but the New Testament canon had not yet been definitely decided upon. Eusebius tells us that he divided all of the books known into three classes: Class one, those accepted by all; class two, the disputed books; class three, the spurious books.

If we had one of these Bibles to-day we could tell whether he decided upon the New Testament canon as we have it at the present time. Unfortunately, no one of these fifty Bibles has come down to us, so we

are not at all sure that the list of the canonical books as given by Eusebius in his Bibles is the same as the present New Testament canon. We do know, though, that in A. D. 365 the list was complete and exactly the same as our present list. This we learn from the letter of the great Bishop Athanasius, read in the churches on Easter Day, A. D. 365. It establishes the fact that the New Testament canon was settled at this date, if not before, because the books named in the canonical list are those of our New Testament.

#### SUMMARY

1. The New Testament began in the Oral Gospels, and its growth was steady and natural.
2. The Epistles were first written because they were letters of help and encouragement and warning to the early Christian churches.
3. The written Gospels came last, when the disciples were afraid that all of the eye-witnesses might be gone before the story was written.
4. The Church became familiar with all these books probably through their use in the church services, and by reading them privately, and by conversation and repetition.
5. The canon grew out of the informal choice of the great mass of Christians, the question being, which books are of the most spiritual help?
6. Naturally some books were not known in all the churches; consequently, some would not be chosen, and their canonicity might be disputed.
7. There would be some doubt, too, about the au-

thors, as the members of the different churches, not hearing the author's name, would be dependent perhaps upon the tradition or say-so of somebody else. This accounts for the dispute about the authorship of Hebrews, II Peter, and others. The early Christian Fathers wrote many of these traditions and are a source of information on the subject, but sometimes they differ.

8. The growth of the New Testament canon is similar to that of the Old because both show the natural growth of literature.

9. The Old Testament, of course, was written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek when Greek became the spoken language of the Jews.

10. The New Testament was written in colloquial Greek because that was the language in Christ's time. Afterward the spoken language became Latin and the Bible was translated into that language. Later, versions had to be made for different peoples in their own tongue.

## CHAPTER XII

### ROMANCE OF THE OLD MANUSCRIPTS

The word "manuscript" means any composition written by hand, but technically in Bible study it is a copy of the original in the same tongue. We have no manuscripts of the Bible earlier than the fourth century A. D. These are copies of the whole Bible, necessarily incomplete, because parts have been torn out and lost, but in the main they contain most of the Bible. The question naturally occurs, how do we know that there were other manuscripts older than these? In fact, since there are no Bible manuscripts before the fourth century A. D., how do we know what was the text of the Old and the New Testaments and what were the books included in each? In the first place, we learn something about them from references, allusions, and quotations, but this is not all. These old manuscripts of the fourth century are copies of older manuscripts now lost, and perhaps these again of older ones, and the latter, copies of more ancient ones still. Our present old manuscripts of the Bible are copies of copies or perhaps one of the many copies of the original.

To show the origin of the manuscripts we now possess we quote Professor W. H. Bennett:

Our present manuscripts are the result of three distinct processes: (a) A process of frequent copying and recopying of Greek manuscripts of a Greek translation; (b) A similar process of copying Hebrew manuscripts in the "Square Hebrew" character; (c) A third like process of copying the Samaritan Pentateuch, that is, the copying of Hebrew manuscript in the Samaritan variety of the ancient Hebrew character.<sup>1</sup>

Though these points apply to the book of Genesis primarily, they nevertheless illustrate the process by which Bible manuscripts have been produced. The New Testament manuscripts were made from copying and recopying Greek manuscripts. This frequent copying and recopying gave the best of opportunity for making mistakes, but the same errors would not be committed by all the copyists, so that the science of textual criticism, by comparing the text of the best old manuscripts and versions, can give us the true text approximately.

Knowing how the old manuscripts have been made, we naturally ask their use. The consensus of opinion among scholars is in substance this: First, the study of old manuscripts reveals discrepancies, but a more substantial unity as well. Second, the study of manuscripts reveals a common origin which we call *the* text, which taught essentially the same truths as all the copies. Scholars have found that various readings are caused either by carelessness due to some physical or mental cause; by mistake of transcribers in regard

<sup>1</sup> *New Century Bible*, notes on Genesis.

to the true text of the original; by imperfections in the ancient manuscripts themselves from which the copy was made; or, as was often the case, by marginal notes or critical conjectures being interpolated as an improvement on the original text; or there may have been willful corruptions made to prove the truth of the sect of the copyist. At any rate, there are different readings for both the Old and the New Testaments in these different manuscripts.

We might say, then, that by comparing these various readings of the best old manuscripts we get, in as accurate form as possible, the true text of the Bible. If two out of three agree on a certain reading, we are inclined to think that this is the correct text. Perhaps it might be interesting to notice a few of the rules observed by scholars in using the old manuscripts. One of the first principles is that the more difficult or obscure reading should be preferred to the plainer or easier one, which may be an explanation of the scribe, not the original; another, that the shorter reading is to be preferred to the longer because in some cases the longer reading is an explanation of the real thought and may therefore have been interpolated by the scribe; another rule, a caution really, is to suspect any reading that seems to have a personal, private, or a sectarian meaning.

Old manuscripts are divided into two classes, according to the form of the writing used—uncials, which look like our capitals, and cursives, something like our running hand with no separation into words. The uncials are older and consequently better authority





ΟΤΟΨΟΣΘΠΟΥΕΕΘΗΚΑ  
ΑΥΤΟΝΑΛΛΑΥΠΑΓΕΤΕ  
ΕΙΠΑΤΕΤΟΙΣΜΑΘΗΤΑΙΟ

CODEX VATICANUS

一三

ΕΝΑΡΧΗΗΝΘΛΟΓΟΣΚΑΙΘΛΟΓΟΣΗ  
ΠΡΟΣΤΟΝΘΝΙΚΑΙΘΣΗΝΘΛΟΓΟΣ  
ΟΥΤΟΣΗΝΕΝΑΡΧΗΤΠΡΟΣΤΟΝΘΝ

CODEX ALEXANDRINUS

[illegible]

## QUEEN OF THE CURSIVES

than the cursives, unless the cursive should happen to have been copied from a manuscript which was older than the old uncial manuscript used as a copy. In these very old manuscripts there are no spacings between words, no sections, no marks of punctuation, no mechanical helps in getting at the meaning. We can tell something of the age of a manuscript from this very fact; the older the manuscripts are, the fewer mechanical helps exist. There are many of both these kinds but we choose for our present purpose only a few of the oldest and the best.

The first one is called the Vatican manuscript or the Vaticanus, or the Codex B. The history of this old manuscript is very fascinating. We do not know where it came from nor how it got into the Vatican Library, but we do know that the Vatican Library was founded in 1448 or more than forty years before Columbus discovered America. It may have been there at the founding of the library. Probably it became part of this library, as many old books do, through a gift; or perhaps it formed part of the nucleus of the Vatican Library at first. As the accompanying illustration shows, it is an uncial written without spacing, without sections, breathing marks, or punctuation marks. It is a book containing 759 delicate leaves of vellum written in three narrow columns on a page and bound into one volume. The characters are simple, clear, and beautiful. The text of the Old Testament is based on the Septuagint version; parts, of course, are gone; for instance, most of Genesis is lacking and part of the Psalms. In the New Testament

a few of the Epistles are missing. Its date is the fourth century A. D.

But the chief thing about the manuscript is its value in Bible study. It is one of the oldest manuscripts, and, other things being equal, age is of most importance in the study of manuscripts. This manuscript is of the highest value in determining the true text of the Scriptures and is always consulted and compared with the other old manuscripts when a critical version of the Bible is made. We may say, then, in textual criticism it is one of the best manuscripts of the Bible.

The history of this manuscript is especially interesting because of the difficulty experienced in gaining access to it. No attention was paid to it until about the middle of the last century. After scholars began to study the texts of the Bible, Dr. Tregelles, an English research scholar, backed by letters from a great Catholic prelate, tried to gain access to it in order to compare its text with some other texts. It was with difficulty that he secured permission to see the book. Priests were set to watch him so that he could copy nothing. He was searched, too, before entering, in order that he might not conceal any writing material. Being a scholar, no doubt he looked first for some disputed bit of the text; and when the priests saw this they took the book away. He, however, succeeded in carrying off some lines on his cuffs and finger-nails. Later, Dr. Tischendorf tried to see the manuscript but was not allowed to do so. After he had become famous, however, and had discovered the great Sinaitic manu-

script, he was allowed to take the book and finally was given permission to translate it for the world. If we cannot see the manuscript itself, we know that the original is in the Vatican Library, and we have, as well as Dr. Tischendorf's translation, a facsimile of the manuscript. The reason the Catholics gave for withholding it from the public was that they wished a translation to be made by one of their own church. In fact, a translation had been begun by one of their cardinals, but it is to Dr. Tischendorf we owe our knowledge of the manuscript.

One fact in its history shows the irony of fate. When Napoleon conquered so much of the world, he carried off many of the treasures of Italy to France and with them took this old manuscript from the Vatican Library. It remained in France until after the Battle of Waterloo. While it was in Paris anybody could have seen it, translated it, made notes upon it, and given the translation to the world, but nobody was interested enough in this kind of research work. Tregelles and Tischendorf were both very young; consequently the manuscript was kept from the public until Tischendorf's translation.

The second famous manuscript is the Sinaiticus, or Codex Aleph, the Hebrew letter Aleph. The history of this manuscript is really the most fascinating of all but one. When the Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity, his mother, Helena, also became a very active worker and spent a great deal of time in trying to discover the important places mentioned in the Old Testament, and finally felt satisfied

that her searchers had discovered the place where God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. As the tradition goes, she had a convent built on the site of Mount Sinai, which was, perhaps, partly a fortification. There is still a monastery at this place called the Monastery of St. Catherine. In it is a very large manuscript library, because it was on the direct route to Jerusalem and therefore the resort of many pilgrims. It is said that each sect had a special chapel. Probably some of these manuscripts were given to the monks by the guests who stopped on their way to Jerusalem or were forgotten by them on leaving. In all the centuries these monks have made no use of their library, and seemingly have had very little influence on the Arabians round about, so they deserved to have their great treasure taken.

It was in this library that the Codex Aleph lay undiscovered among other manuscripts. In 1844, Dr. Tischendorf, the great German research scholar, set out for Egypt and Syria to search in the old convents in these countries for possible manuscripts not yet known. He spent a great deal of time in Egypt but found nothing there that was worth while, and then went on to the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. The walls of the convent are about forty feet high, and the only way of entrance is by means of a basket pulled up by a rope.

Before he left Cairo, the mother home of the monastery, Dr. Tischendorf had procured a letter from the superior there; but wished to examine it more closely, so he did not present it. When the monks called upon



him for his credentials, he sent up word that he did have a letter but unfortunately had left it at home. After some bickering on the part of the monks because they were not satisfied with the story, the basket was let down and Dr. Tischendorf was drawn up into the monastery.

That evening, in a basket of waste paper about to be used for kindling, he discovered an uncial. Drawing it out of the basket he saw at once that it was part of one of the very old Bible manuscripts. He was so delighted that he did not try to conceal his joy from the monks. The next morning when he tried to find the rest of the manuscript it was missing, and the monks assured him that they knew nothing about it. Very much disappointed, he took these few leaves, forty-three, with him and deposited them in the university library at Leipsic, because his patron at that time was Frederick Augustus. These few leaves of the manuscript are called the Codex Frederico-Augustanus.

But Dr. Tischendorf could not forget that probably the rest of the manuscript was still in St. Catherine's; so he paid a second visit in 1853, but there was no parchment to be found. Nobody knew anything about such a manuscript. At last, in 1859, backed by the Russian Government, as the Czar was the head of the Russian Church, Dr. Tischendorf appeared again at the monastery of St. Catherine and was welcomed heartily by the monks. The library was thrown open to him and very many valuable manuscripts were placed in his hands. But still there was no sign of *the*

manuscript for which he was searching. After a stay of a few days, he gave up and ordered his Arabs to prepare to go back on the next day. That evening he went for a walk with the steward of the monastery and, talking over old manuscripts, the steward happened to say, "I, too, have been reading the Septuagint." When they returned to the monastery, the monk took from his cell an old manuscript which proved to be the manuscript for which Dr. Tischendorf had been searching for fifteen years. This time he knew enough not to show any great delight when it was placed in his hands and was allowed to take it into his cell and look it over during that night. In telling the story afterward he said that when he reached his cell he danced and shouted for joy to think that at last he had possession of this great manuscript. He spent the whole night working over it and to his delight found the original Greek apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas and a part of the apocryphal Shepherd of Hermas. The Epistle of Barnabas in the original had never before been discovered. Next morning he asked for permission to take the manuscript to Cairo to translate it; after some trouble and delay he was allowed to do so because he was working under the patronage of the head of the Greek Church, the Czar. Eight leaves were allowed to him at a time, and he and two of his German fellow students translated the whole manuscript containing 110,000 lines. For some reason the manuscript was never returned to the monks at St. Catherine's but "loaned," it was said, to the Greek Church of Russia, and before the War was in the

library at St. Petersburg in possession of the Greek Catholic Church, just as the Vaticanus is in the possession of the Roman Catholic Church.

The date of this manuscript is about the same date as that of the Vaticanus, that is, the fourth century A. D. Tischendorf thought it might probably be as early as the Council of Nice, in A. D. 325. It is a book containing  $346\frac{1}{2}$  leaves,  $13\frac{1}{2}$ " by nearly 15" long. One hundred and ninety-nine of these leaves contain parts of the Old Testament. As is the case with the other old manuscripts, some of the Bible is missing. The New Testament has the canonical books and also two of the apocryphal books, the Epistle of Barnabas and part of the Shepherd of Hermas. The poetical pages are written in columns of two, and the others in columns of four. The characters are plain and distinct, and written in beautiful uncials on the finest of parchment. Tischendorf thought that the parchment was made from the skin of young antelopes. There are no accents or breathings, no separation of words, no marks of punctuation, and no large initials. In value it ranks with the Vatican Codex. They are about equal as a basis for textual criticism. It is interesting to note that Tischendorf thought it might be a trifle older than the Vaticanus.

The third great old manuscript is the Alexandrine, Codex A, or the Codex Alexandrinus. It, too, makes us curious about the place and the time that it was written. All we know about it is that the Patriarch of Constantinople sent it as a present to Charles I in 1628. Tradition says that it was probably written in

Egypt, perhaps in Alexandria, and therefore takes the name Alexandrine. At first it was in the royal library, but at the building of the British Museum in 1753 it was transferred there and is now, as you see, in the possession of another great branch of the Church—the Protestant Episcopal Church. Unlike the other two, it is bound in four volumes. Three of these volumes contain the Old Testament in the Septuagint version, and the fourth volume contains the New Testament. There are many defects in this, as in all old manuscripts, but at the close of this manuscript there is the only extant copy of the apocryphal Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. This codex is written on vellum, very well preserved but fragile and kept under a glass. The uncial letters are larger and more elegant than those of the Vatican Codex, but there is no separation into words and no accents or breathing marks. Occasionally, however, there are marks of punctuation, and the text is divided into sections and paragraphs, frequently marked by a new line and an initial letter. Of course, this punctuation and division into sections and paragraphs and periods may have been done by a reviser who worked over the manuscript, but there may have been some divisions in the original; if so, this fact would go to show at once that this uncial is not so old as the others. The work, too, aside from the lettering, is done very carelessly. There are many omissions and mistakes in spelling. Its date is the fifth century A. D., a century later than the other two. There is one thing noteworthy about this manuscript. Because of its acces-

sibility it has been the most used by scholars in textual study as a source of comparison, and it was the first to be used in correcting the text of the New Testament.

The fourth famous manuscript is a palimpsest called the Codex Ephraem, or Codex C. Its date is the fifth century. Its history, too, reads almost like a romance—a literary romance, at any rate. In Rome in 1535 a scholar died who had quite a collection of books and manuscripts in his library. The oldest volume in this collection contained sermons and other writings purporting to have been written by Ephraem of Syria. The old volume went through the hands of several different owners and finally came into the possession of Catherine de Medici. She took it with her when she left Italy for France perhaps to use it to strengthen her spiritually. After her death it was placed in the Paris library and nothing more was thought of it. But in the latter part of the seventeenth century a scholar and careful reader, looking it over, thought that he discovered another text under that of Ephraem's sermons and homilies. The traces were very faint, and, obscured by the later writing, it was hard to decipher, for the writer of the sermons had taken the old parchment leaves haphazardly, using the pages as he came to them in no order whatever, sometimes upside down, being interested only in getting writing material for his sermons. We can imagine what the task would be for one who tried to translate the writing underneath and partially erased. He not only had to make out the old faint text under the new, but



he also had to rearrange pages, put them right side up, and then translate the whole. It was a tremendous task, but Dr. Tischendorf was equal to it.

He came to Paris in December, 1840, and in September, 1841, after less than a year, he had translated this Greek manuscript, hidden so long under the upper writing. He thought that he discovered no less than four handwritings on this under manuscript, so that there would be at least no less than four revisers of the original old manuscript. It ranks with the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrine in some respects, but is superior to the Alexandrine, especially in the text of the Gospels. There are 209 leaves, 145 being from the New Testament. There are 37 chapters of the Gospels lacking, 10 of Acts, 42 chapters of the Epistles, 8 chapters of Revelation, the whole of II John and II Thessalonians. In the parts preserved the manuscript is very accurate. The text is written one column on a page, and the order of the books is the same as that of Codex A. The Ephraem Codex is now in the National Library at Paris.

The United States also has an old copy of the Bible consisting of four Biblical Greek manuscripts, bought by Charles L. Freer of Detroit from an Arab dealer near Cairo in 1906. These manuscripts had been offered by the Arabs a little earlier to Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt of England, and on their advice their purchase was recommended to the British Museum. But nothing came of this offer, so Freer bought them and brought them back to Michigan, and Dr. Henry A. Sanders of the University of Michigan translated



them. These manuscripts contain the books Deuteronomy, Joshua, and Psalms of the Old Testament, the Gospels, four Pauline Epistles, and Hebrews of the New Testament. The date is supposed to be in the fifth century, perhaps about the date of the Alexandrine. Freer gave these manuscripts to the Smithsonian Institution at Washington together with many others of his treasures, leaving enough money to care for them well and safely. Anyone in Washington may enjoy these. These manuscripts are interesting especially to Americans because now we too have a manuscript copy of the Bible in Washington. The manuscript of Deuteronomy and Joshua is known as the *Washingtonensis* or *Washington manuscript*. Because of the discoveries that the universities of the United States are making, we sometime may draw scholars from Europe for research work in this line just as for so long Europe has drawn our scholars there.

There is one other very beautiful manuscript that we might speak of—the *Codex Beza* or *Codex D* or *Codex Cantabrigiensis*. Its date is about the sixth or the fifth century A. D., and its history, too, is shrouded in doubt. Some think because of the Latin in which it is written that its source is the West of Europe and that probably an Eastern Greek text was the basis of the translation into Latin. It may have been prepared in Egypt for use there in the Western churches. It was found by Theodore Beza, the preacher and reformer, who suffered a great many vicissitudes because of his interest in the Bible and religion. But these

studies also made him famous. This Codex was found in 1562 in the city of Lyons, in a monastery which had been pillaged by the Huguenots. In 1581 this manuscript was sent to Cambridge University, where it is now in the new library in a glass case. It ranks with the leading uncials in Bible texts. It is a large volume of 415 leaves and very elegantly bound. The paging shows that originally it had 512 leaves. It is written in the square, upright Greek uncials, has many omissions, and many mutilated pages. The Latin is on the right hand, and the Greek on the left. There are no spaces, no accents, no marks of breathing, and punctuation in many cases is indicated by a simple dot. It is divided into sections and therefore must be later than the other manuscripts mentioned. It is the oldest manuscript that we have containing the story given in John,<sup>2</sup> that of the woman taken in adultery. The oldest manuscripts do not contain that story.

The other style of writing was that of the cursives—the running hand. While there are many of these Bible cursives, the earliest being dated about the tenth century, we shall speak of only two of the most famous. One of these cursives is called the Queen of Cursives, number 33. Its date is the eleventh century. It contains nearly the whole of the New Testament except Revelation, and also a part of the Prophets. It is written on vellum, but every leaf has suffered from damp and decay and in some cases the leaves are stuck together so that the ink on one side is transferred to the other. The manuscript had to be read by a

<sup>2</sup>John viii. 3-11.

“set-off” on the opposite page. That, of course, gave the Greek backwards and added to the difficulty. Dr. Tregelles said that it was the most wearisome to the eye of all manuscripts and exhausted every faculty of attention. It is generally ranked by scholars as very important in textual criticism.

We might speak of the Cursive Montfortianus—number 61. It is of special interest because of the part played in the discussion of the interpolated verse <sup>2</sup>—the verse about the “Three heavenly witnesses” which appears in this manuscript as in some others but is called an interpolation by most scholars. This Cursive is now in Trinity College, Dublin.

Examples have been given of the oldest and most important of these old manuscripts to show what part they play in helping us get at the true Bible text. Very careful work has been done on the Bible since the beginning of research work, but this exhaustive scientific criticism really began in the last half of the last century. By means of this criticism the Bible still holds its place, standing the test of higher criticism, both textual and scientific. Its position is even higher than before this study of the manuscripts, as truth always stands any amount of criticism, always gaining by the process.

#### SUMMARY

1. We have no manuscripts of the Bible older than the fourth century A. D.

\* John v. 7.

2. These are the results of frequent copying and recopying of older manuscripts.

3. The main use of the old manuscripts is to get as near as possible the true text of the Bible.

4. The science of textual criticism is based on the study of old manuscripts, versions, and quotations from the Christian Fathers.

5. According to the kind of lettering used, old manuscripts are divided into two classes—the Uncials and the Cursives.

6. The oldest of the Uncials are the two—the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus.

## CHAPTER XIII

### IMPORTANT EARLY VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE

The ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament and the New differ in one respect. We have no old manuscripts of the New Testament entire except as found with the Old, as for example in the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus. The reason is this: the original books of the New Testament were written on papyrus, not parchment, and a single book, a gospel or an epistle, made a volume. At an early stage there would be no collection of all the New Testament books. Papyrus becomes brittle with age and soon wears out if in use. If buried, it does not withstand dampness and deteriorates. It is only in the dry climate of Middle and Upper Egypt that buried papyri have survived, as in the case of the Oxyrhynchus papyri already mentioned. Very early manuscripts of the whole of the New Testament, therefore, would be rare if they existed, because each book made a volume by itself and was written on a roll of perishable papyrus.

But besides the old manuscripts, which were copies of the original in the same tongue, there are two other classes of material available for getting at the true text of the Bible. These are, first, quotations from the writings of the Christian Fathers, the Patristic writ-

ings. The quotations show how these men understood the Bible text, coming to them from an earlier source; and therefore their quotations and opinions in disputed cases might by comparison aid in deciding on the true text.

Often, however, these quotations are useless as far as the text is concerned, because we can never be sure whether the author is quoting from memory or from the writing before him, unless he is writing of one book only. In that case, probably the quotation is exact not only in meaning but in text.

But the second class of material is far more valuable: the versions—translations of the Bible into languages other than the original. The copies of the New Testament, for instance, in the Greek, the original tongue, are manuscripts, but the translations from Greek into any other language are versions. The source of knowledge for these different versions is one reason for the variations in the Patristic quotations as well as in the different manuscripts and versions. The number of manuscripts of the separate books of the New Testament would be very large; and when we consider how widespread Christianity became during the first three or four centuries, we see that there would be many versions also or the translations into the tongues of the different countries represented. Again, before the canon of the New Testament was decided upon, there must have been many copies of these versions. Gradually when the canon of the New Testament was fixed, all the accepted books would become a part of Holy Scripture; and the two Testa-



ments would be put together as we now have them, though each might exist separately as they do to-day.

But, in about B. C. 132 we had a great version of the Bible, the Septuagint or LXX, growing out of the need of the Jews for a version of the Old Testament which they could understand, as the Hebrew language had long before become classic. Before this great Greek version there were at least Aramaic versions of parts of the Old Testament. Indeed, the free translations of the targums might be classed with versions. We recall the fact that the Palestinian Jews never accepted the Apocrypha as part of their sacred Scripture as the Alexandrian Jews did, and they disliked it for other reasons also. Consequently there would grow up a feeling against the Septuagint and a tendency to return to the original Hebrew, which would give rise to Hebrew manuscripts and Aramaic versions. This dislike is seen in several versions like that of Aquila and others who went back to the original Hebrew as the source of their versions. However, the fact remains that the Septuagint was and is the great version of the Old Testament. A scholar, in speaking of the importance and value of the versions, divides all versions into two classes: the Septuagint and the rest of the versions. This is strong praise when we remember the Vulgate. One reason for its value is that it is a primary version. Versions of the Old Testament are either primary, made directly from the Hebrew text, or secondary, made from a version. Secondary versions establish the true text of the primary version from

which they were made, but not the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. For example, the Old Latin is of the utmost importance in determining the text of the LXX; but the latter is but a translation from the Hebrew.

Then, the Septuagint was the Old Testament of Christ's day, that used by the apostles and disciples, and known everywhere. It was, as has been emphasized, in the Greek, this being the language spoken widely after the conquest of the world by Alexander the Great. In fact, Greek remained the language of the Church even after Roman power and rule became supreme. St. Paul wrote his epistles in Greek, the first bishops down to A. D. 189 were Greek, Clement wrote his epistles to the Corinthians in the same language, and all the literature of the Roman Church, as well as that of the Eastern Church, is Greek. The educated classes spoke and wrote Greek; those not educated used Greek more freely than Latin. But there was one stronghold of the Latin in northern Africa, lying along the Mediterranean Sea. Here there was a large population of Latin-speaking people. Although the Church in general used the Greek, what is called the Old Latin Version was made for the church in Africa. One of the most famous scholars at the close of the second century was Tertullian of Carthage, who refers to a Latin copy of the New Testament which was in general use by the churches of that place. It is not known whether the translation was made in Africa or Syria, but it existed and was well known in Africa during the first half of the third century. Obvi-

ously, this version might have been made from either the Greek or the Hebrew, but it was made from the Septuagint.

The value of this Old Latin Version, however, is the main point. Probably it was the parent version of the Italic Versions, especially in northern Italy; and was brought to England by the missionaries, and existed there side by side with the later Latin Vulgate. This version, of course, was copied again and again and the copies copied; so the natural result was that after a time there were very many discrepancies, the copies being very imperfect. These various readings caused annoyance and confusion and probably were in some cases detrimental to the faith. Therefore, the head of the Church decided that it was necessary to make another version in order to correct the imperfections and mistakes in the copies of the Old Latin Version. This was over a thousand years before Martin Luther and the Reformation. The head of the as yet undivided Church, the Pope, commissioned Jerome, one of the greatest scholars of the day, to make a new version of the Bible in Latin. This was to be for the benefit of the Church at large. At first Jerome did not intend to make such an extensive revision, but, after using the Old Latin and the Greek versions, he determined to consult the Hebrew manuscript also. To do this he perfected himself in the Hebrew language and used the Hebrew as the main source for the Old Testament translation. This version, known as the Latin Vulgate, meaning for the common people, was done very carefully and accurately, and the work ex-

tended through almost twenty years, having been begun in 383 or 385 and finished in A. D. 404.)

We remember why the apocryphal books were given a place in the Septuagint. When Jerome made the Latin Vulgate he inclined to the belief that as a scholar he would omit the apocryphal books from his version; but the Pope and other officers of the Church decided to have the Apocrypha among the canonical books, and this is why the Apocrypha is found in the Latin Vulgate and why the apocryphal books are now in the Catholic version of the Bible. The influence of the Latin Vulgate was of the very greatest. It was really the version used by the Western Church up to the time of the Reformation, about a thousand years, and to-day it is the basis of the Roman Catholic Bible, because at the Council of Trent in 1546, after the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church decreed that, as a church, they accepted the Latin Vulgate as the basis of their version of the Bible.

The Vulgate stands out very plainly, too, because of the fact that its starting point, unlike many of the versions, was not to give the people the Scripture in their own tongue, but the necessity for revising the Old Latin Version in order to correct the mistakes that had crept in through copying and recopying.

Besides the Old Latin Version and, coming earlier than Jerome's Vulgate, there were many other versions in the different tongues to meet the need of the Christian churches. The most important of these are those of the Syriac, the Old Latin, and the Coptic Versions. There were many versions of the Latin as well as of the

Coptic, the vernacular language of Egypt. In the Coptic there were two dialects—that of Upper Egypt and that of Lower Egypt, and there were versions in each as well as the Middle Egyptian versions. The most important of these, the Bohairic Version, that of Lower Egypt, ultimately became the accepted Bible of the Coptic church, and is better known and preserved by manuscripts. There are versions in Ethiopic, Arabic, Georgian, Persian, and Gothic; but those in Old Latin, Coptic, and Syriac occupy the first place both on account of their age and because they are the chief extant representatives of early and important versions. Perhaps most important of all of these was the Syrian Version, or the Peshito, a word meaning “simple” or “faithful.” The Old Testament translation was based on the Hebrew and the New Testament on the Greek, but the Old Testament shows the influence of the LXX also. This version was made about the middle of the second century A. D., or possibly the first, and some even have given a date as late as the fifth century. The object of the version was to give to the Syrian church a version in their own tongue. It contains the whole Bible except the Epistles II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and Revelation; and is valuable because it is of great service in questions of exegesis. Among the other Syrian versions, the Curetonian, found in the monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai in 1892, is important, though imperfect.

When we turn to the Gothic, we find Ulfilas, the “Apostle of the Goths,” gave his people a version of the Bible in their own tongue. As the Vulgate was



practically the Bible of the Western Church for about a thousand years, so the version of Ulfilas was the Bible of the Eastern Church. This version of the Bible was made in the fourth century A. D., and makes a good transition to the English Bible. These versions have generally been made to meet a demand, just as many of the twentieth century have, as for example, the present versions of the Bible into the different Indian dialects. But the Bible itself is always the same, whether we speak of it as the English, or the Greek, or the Syrian Bible.

#### SUMMARY

1. The object of textual criticism is to discover the true text of the Bible.
2. In textual criticism, the sources of the text are ancient manuscripts, ancient versions, and Patristic quotations.
3. There are no manuscripts or versions of the Bible earlier than the fourth century A. D.
4. Texts became corrupt, even if correct at first, through the process of copying and recopying.
5. Note what the invention of the printing press at that time would have done.
6. Versions are divided into two classes: (a) primary, those versions of the Old Testament made direct from the Hebrew text; and (b) secondary, those made from a version.
7. The Septuagint being a primary version, translated direct from the Hebrew, is of great value in finding the true text of the Old Testament.



8. There are many versions of both Old and New Testaments.

9. The most important of these early ones are the LXX, or the Septuagint, the Old Latin, the Syriac Version, and the Latin Vulgate.

10. The Latin Vulgate included the Apocrypha.

11. In 1546 at the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church adopted the Vulgate as the basis of the Roman Catholic Bible; therefore the Roman Catholic Bible includes in its canonical list the eleven apocryphal books.

12. There were no early English versions of the Bible, because there was no English nation or language then.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FIRST ENGLISH VERSIONS

We may divide the history of the English Bible into two parts: first, the preparation for it; second, the English versions. After the invasion of the Angles and Saxons, England and its language became Anglo-Saxon, although the great mass of the people could neither read nor write. As far as Christianity was concerned, all that they knew of it was learned from oral instruction. The priests and a few learned men had the Bible, either in the Old Latin Version or the Vulgate. Missionaries had early been sent from Ireland and from Rome into England, but the knowledge of the Christian religion progressed very slowly there, at least as far as Bible literature was concerned. At first, as in all countries, early literature was closely connected with religion. We have seen that there were versions of parts of the Bible in Syriac, Coptic, and many tongues even in the second and third centuries after Christ. Naturally we wonder why there was no great version of the English Bible before the last of the fourteenth century. Probably this was because of local conditions—a new nation, the ignorance of the masses, no language but dialects; all these had their effect. But perhaps the policy of the Latin Church

had something to do with this also; for that was opposed to versions in the native tongues, while the undivided Church and the Eastern Church favored native versions.

But through the different centuries there were men whose work marks the growth of the preparation for the Bible in the English vernacular. The first of these was Caedmon, who lived in the latter part of the seventh century. He was simply an uneducated peasant, a servant in the monastery now known as Whitby. Caedmon had never shown any marks of poetic genius. Indeed, at the festive gatherings of the servants in the great hall he was accustomed to leave when it came his turn to sing. One night when this happened and he had gone out, he fell asleep in the stable and heard a voice say, "Caedmon, sing to me!" He answered, "I cannot sing and for that reason I have come away from the feast." But again the voice commanded him to sing, and Caedmon then said, "What shall I sing?" The voice said, "The first beginning of created things." So Caedmon sang this song of praise to his Creator; and in the morning when he told his story to the bailiff, the latter brought him to the abbess, before whom he sang his song. It was at once recognized as inspired, and so the stories of both the Old and the New Testaments were told this ignorant servant. He put them into poetry, singing them to the accompaniment of his harp. To quote the words of Bede: "And he turned into sweetest song all he could learn from hearing it, and he made his teachers his listeners."<sup>1</sup> In this way

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, 4. 24.

a knowledge of the great stories of the Bible came to the ears of the common people and was passed on from one to another. Caedmon is always named as one of the first poets of Anglo-Saxon literature, but our interest in him, as Bible students, is that he sang Bible stories in the vernacular. Following his lead, there were other versifiers who made the English people familiar with Bible stories.

Even while Caedmon was singing in the North of England, there was a bishop Aldhelm in the South, who had the wit to realize that the common people cared little for his homilies or sermons; therefore, being a good musician, he disguised himself as a minstrel, took his stand on a bridge over which the people had to pass, and sang so sweetly that he gained the willing ear of the crowd. This done, he tuned his song to a religious note, making minstrelsy a teacher of religion. Involuntarily St. Paul's words come to mind: "To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."<sup>2</sup> Not only music but a sister art, painting, taught the chief scenes in Bible story by pictures arranged in churches for this purpose.

Bede, one of the greatest teachers the world has ever known, comes next in time. Although he never went more than ten miles from the place where he was born, yet he knew all the wisdom then known by scholars, and students flocked to him as a teacher. They came from all parts of the world. One of the most famous of them was the scholar Alcuin, who

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. ix. 22.

afterwards carried back the learning and the wisdom gathered at Bede's feet to the empire of Charlemagne. From thence it was spread over the continent. So we may say this man influenced the whole world by his teaching, although some would think he had had no chance, never having been more than ten miles from his birthplace. He was a great ecclesiastical historian and the first translator of a part of the Bible into English, for he made a translation of the Gospel of St. John. Possibly he loved this Gospel better than the others, or it may be that the other three Gospels had already been translated. If so, we know nothing about it, but Bede, as the last work of his life, finished only just before his death, gave a version of the Gospel of St. John in English to the English people in A. D. 735. The story of the dying monk exerting himself to finish his work is no less than sublime.

The third person of importance in bringing some parts of the Bible to the common people in their own vernacular was the great King Alfred. He began his famous book of Dooms with a free translation of the ten commandments, known as King Alfred's Decalogue, and also gave the people an unfinished version of the Psalms together with a number of homilies on Bible subjects.

There were also some notable translations of the Gospels in the interlinear form, that is, with the Latin originals and under it, word for word, the English. For instance, a Psalter, "interlineated" with an early Latin manuscript of the Psalms was made late in the ninth century. Another interlinear version from about

the middle of the tenth century is of particular interest. It is called the Lindisfarne Gospels, or the Gospels of St. Cuthbert, or the Book of Durham, because it once belonged to Durham Cathedral. A generation later than the Lindisfarne Gospels there was another similar version made of the Gospels called the Rushworth, which may now be seen in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

During the tenth and the eleventh centuries we have several versions of the Gospels, including the one much used in Wessex. These versions may perhaps be variants of the same original. We can tell neither the date nor the authorship. At the close of the tenth century Abbot Aelfric made an Anglo-Saxon version of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Esther, Job, part of the book of Kings, and the two apocryphal books, Judith and Maccabees. There were many Anglo-Saxon versions too, in both the North and the South. With the object of instructing the people, early in the thirteenth century Ormin, or Orm, produced a great poem. It is a metrical version of the Gospels and the Acts and was known as the Ormulum, from the fact, as the author quaintly says, "Orm it wrought." It is a manuscript of about 20,000 lines, now preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

During the centuries, by means of these poetic paraphrases and free translations of parts of the Bible into the English vernacular the people learned much of Bible truth. Later the Mystery and Morality plays, which originated in a desire of the clergy to teach the people, were made the medium of religious instruction.



Thus drama, music, painting, and poetry each had its share in the preparation for an English Bible. It might be said that this preliminary work corresponds to the work done in Old Testament times when religious history was sung, told, and retold.

Though much in this preparatory period has necessarily been omitted, yet this brief review of the salient points lays the foundation for understanding the first great English version.

The second period is marked by the production of the whole Bible, the first version, into the English vernacular. Wycliffe, a professor and priest of that day, has been called "the morning star of the Reformation," because although coming before Luther's time yet he is like him in spirit—a reformer, fighting against the methods of the church first of all and then against its doctrines. He differed from the clergy on many matters relating to church and church government, and outspoken and fearless in his criticism of the church, he was several times in danger of losing his life. Indeed, he was tried for heresy; but, protected by strong political friends like John of Gaunt, escaped martyrdom. His controversy with the Church led him finally to a decision important to Bible students. He thought that every Englishman had a right to the Bible in his own tongue; therefore he translated the Bible into English. This version appeared in 1382. We call it Wycliffe's version, but probably he translated only the New Testament and the last part of the Old; the part preceding "Baruch" is thought to have been made by his old friend and pupil Hereford.

In this version there are two sharp contrasts between Wycliffe and Hereford. The literary style of the two men, as well as the dialects used, is different. Hereford favored the Southern dialect, Wycliffe used the East-Midland and the Northern. These facts make it easy to separate the two parts of the translation and also show why a revision was necessary. This original version appearing in 1382 was revised because of the different styles and the fact that the renderings too were inaccurate; for the text which Wycliffe translated was one that in the course of centuries had become corrupt. Wycliffe died in 1384, and the revision of Wycliffe's translation appeared in 1388 and is the first complete English version of the Bible. His sources were the Latin versions only and principally the Vulgate; therefore, as many of them were inaccurate, his work is not so valuable as a text. Then, too, printing not having been invented, this version was not printed until almost five hundred years after it was finished.

As the bulk of the English people could not read, Wycliffe and his priests and helpers went about through the country preaching, reading, and interpreting the Bible to the common people. Wycliffe's great hope was that the time would come in England "when every ploughboy could read the Bible in his own tongue."

After commenting on Wycliffe's ideal, H. W. Hoare sums up his influence in the following words:

Such . . . was Wycliffe's ideal, and thus in the fourteenth century the position occupied by the Bible may be described as undergoing a threefold

change. In the place of a fragmentary English Bible there was to be a complete one. In addition to a Bible in a dead language for the ritual of public worship, there was to be a vernacular Bible brought by the agency of trained itinerant preachers to the home door. In the place of a mystical Bible, interpreted only by ecclesiastical authority, there was to be an open Bible accessible to laity and clergy alike.<sup>3</sup>

From a literary point of view Wycliffe's version had great value. We are accustomed to say that as Chaucer in poetry fixed the Midland Dialect as the English literary language, so Wycliffe in prose did the same thing in his version of the English Bible. Its Biblical value is this: The traveling preachers by reading and explaining it everywhere made the people familiar with the truths of the Bible. It gave them a desire to have the Scriptures in their own tongue, a desire which afterwards became a demand. It suggested, too, the idea of translation to others. It was the first English version and led the way.

In the early sixteenth century, over one hundred years after the death of Wycliffe, conditions in England were vastly different from those of the age of Wycliffe. There is no other period in English history so prolific in English versions of the Bible, unless it be the present century. The version of Wycliffe had pointed the way; the printing press had been invented; the Reformation had made every one alive to religious thought; the people were ready and eager for the

<sup>3</sup>H. W. Hoare, *Evolution of the English Bible*, p. 99.

word of God in their own tongue; and the publication of the Greek New Testament by Erasmus as a result of the Renaissance was an inspiration to devoted and scholarly men.

The greatest among these was William Tyndale, born on the border of Wales and England in 1492. The year in which Columbus added a new continent to the world was marked by the birth of a man who gave this new continent its guiding force—the English Bible. In Oxford he was distinguished for his scholarship. His knowledge of languages was remarkable; for it is said he was able to speak and write seven different languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, and English. Later he must have learned German also for we find him using it in his translations. He knew the Scriptures thoroughly also; and, therefore, when Erasmus' Greek New Testament came out, it was a great inspiration to Tyndale and may have suggested to him the translation of an English New Testament from the original Greek, not from the Old Latin or from the Latin Vulgate. Perhaps the sentiment expressed by Erasmus in the preface to his New Testament was a spur to Tyndale. Speaking of the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles particularly, Erasmus wrote as follows:

I wish they were translated into all languages of all peoples, that they might be read and known not merely by the Scotch and Irish but even by the Turks and Saracens. . . . I wish that the ploughman might sing parts of them at his plough and the weaver at his shuttle, and that the trav-

eler might beguile with their narration the weariness of his way.<sup>4</sup>

From this quotation Erasmus, like Wycliffe, seems to have had a great desire to give the Scriptures to everyone in his native tongue, to make the Bible a household word and guide.

Tyndale, too, seems to have had the same aim, judging from his reply to the church official: "If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost."

In his short life even, he saw the promise of the fulfillment of his purpose in the appearance of his English New Testament. Though the beginning of the sixteenth century was an active, favorable time in many respects, yet because of the troubled religious conditions in England, William Tyndale knew that a translation of the Bible in English was not to be hoped for in his native country and therefore went abroad. There he published in 1525, four hundred years ago, the first New Testament in English.

Shiploads of New Testaments came to England, and the church was in a quandary about the disposal of these books; for faster than they could burn them, so it seemed, these New Testaments of Tyndale's came to England. Some amusing stories are told in this connection. One in particular is worthy of quotation as it sums up the situation. The Bishop of London made a bargain with a merchant doing a large busi-

<sup>4</sup>Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Making of the English New Testament*.



ness abroad, that this man buy up these New Testaments and then sell them to him so that he might destroy them and thus put an end to their pestilential influence. The old chronicler Hall writes:

The Bishop, thinking he had God by the toe, when indeed he had, as after he thought, the Devil by the fist, said, "Gentle Mr. Packington, do your diligence and get them; and with all my heart I will pay for them whatsoever they cost you, for the books are erroneous and nought, and I intend surely to destroy them all, and to burn them at Paul's Cross." Augustine Packington *came to William Tyndale*, and said, "William, I know thou art a poor man, . . . and I have now gotten thee a merchant. . . . "Who is the merchant?" said Tyndale. "The Bishop of London," said Packington. "Oh, that is because he will burn them," said Tyndale. "Yea, marry," quoth Packington. . . . And so, forward went the bargain; the bargain; the Bishop had the books; Packington had the thanks; and Tyndale had the money.<sup>5</sup>

But he goes on to say the New Testaments came thicker and faster into England than ever before, so the Bishop sent again for Packington and asked him to account for this. Packington suggested that perhaps it would be a good plan to buy up the stamps by which they were imprinted. The old chronicler, seemingly enjoying this whole story, tells the sequel. Sir Thomas More asked a heretic, on trial for his faith, how it was that Tyndale and others of these translators, having no money, could live and bring out

<sup>5</sup> Robert Demaus, *William Tyndale*, p. 222.



their testaments without help. At the same time, he promised the man favor if he would answer him truly. The suspected heretic answered: "It is the Bishop that hath holpen us for he has bestowed a great deal of money upon New Testaments and that hath been our chief succor and comfort."

The source used by Tyndale for this translation was the Hebrew for the Old Testament which he never finished and the last edition of the Greek New Testament of Erasmus. He also consulted the Vulgate and the German version of Luther as well as a new Latin Testament by Erasmus. He began to work upon the Old Testament and by 1535 had already translated from the Hebrew the five books of Moses and also Job; but he was betrayed by an English spy and cast into prison, from which after several months he was taken out, tried, condemned, convicted of heresy, strangled, and burned at the stake. His last words, since famous, were "O Lord, open Thou the King of England's eyes."

Working in prison, he translated from the Hebrew before his death the book of Jonah, various passages from the prophetical and apocryphal books, and the Old Testament up to and including II Chronicles. We have a glimpse of him in prison, from a letter written to the governor of the castle. In this letter he begs for his warmer clothing, his Hebrew Bible, grammar, and dictionary, and a candle to light his cell, because as he wrote, "it is weary work to sit alone in the dark."

Tyndale is regarded as the father of the present

English Bible, for he gave the New Testament in English to the English people; this fact because of the invention of the printing press put his version once for all upon a sure basis. To be sure, he did not finish all of the Old Testament, but friends of his, coming after him, completed the books left undone.

The influence of Tyndale's version can hardly be overestimated. Although Wycliffe was the first to make an English version and also to conceive the idea of one, yet Tyndale had the advantage of the printing press to preserve and scatter his work broadcast; also he had other sources for his translation which Wycliffe lacked. Yet Tyndale's importance is not in the line of text or critical value, nothing being known even in his day of the manuscripts used in the Revised Version of to-day. The great value of his version lies in the influence it exerted on all succeeding versions, even on the Revised. He is really the true father of the English Bible. To quote from Goodspeed:

Considerable as was the influence of Tyndale upon the thought of his day, it was slight in comparison to that which he has ever since exerted through his translation. Later editors of the English Bible steadily followed his version as far as they possessed it, and his work colors the New Testaments of Coverdale (1535), Rogers (1537), Taverner and the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishops' Bible (1568), and King James (1611). None of these is more than a revision of Tyndale, and his stamp remains on the modern revisions of 1881 and 1901. To the familiar forms of the English New Testament,

Tyndale has contributed not only more than any other man, but more than all others combined. He has shaped the religious vocabulary of the English-speaking world.<sup>6</sup>

Again, in summing up the worth of the King James Version, Goodspeed, after commenting on its service to Protestantism for more than two hundred and fifty years and its liturgical effectiveness because of its diction, writes: “. . . but it was the terse and telling common English of William Tyndale that chiefly colored the King James Bible. . . . It is not too much to say that William Tyndale wrote nine-tenths of the King James New Testament.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

## CHAPTER XV

### LATER ENGLISH VERSIONS

Following the publication of the New Testament and before he could finish the Old, Tyndale was hunted down, betrayed, and put to death for daring to give the English people the New Testament in their own tongue. This enmity toward an English Bible was based in the main on the opinion of church authorities, that it was not only not best but even harmful for the common people to have the Bible in their own vernacular, claiming that the "time was not expedient." The famous Bill of the Synod, 1530, in modern English reads, "the having of the whole Scripture in English is not necessary to Christian men and at this time not expedient." But a change in the sentiment against an English Bible was soon brought about not only by the Church itself, but also by the mercantile interests of the country. Consequently we note that in 1534, even before the death of Tyndale, the church authorities petitioned the king "to decree that the Scriptures should be translated into the vulgar tongue." Thus the translation of the English Bible was allowed and encouraged at first, then licensed by the king in the case of the Rogers' Bible, and finally authorized in the second edition of the Great Bible in 1540, only four

years after the martyrdom of Tyndale. Every one was eager and glad to read the Bible in his mother tongue, and the book was bought and read not by the learned alone but also by the bulk of the people; those who were unable to read had it read to them. The enthusiasm with which it was received showed how greedy the people were for an English Bible. This eagerness is indicated in the quotation in the preceding chapter; for version followed version in quick succession. To be sure, these versions were, in fact, but revisions of Tyndale's as far as the New Testament was concerned.

Coverdale printed a version of both the Old and the New Testament in 1535. This was dedicated to Henry VIII, though not licensed, and was the first printed copy of the whole Bible, Tyndale's in 1525 being the New Testament alone. Coverdale was a friend and fellow laborer of Tyndale and his New Testament was but a revision of Tyndale's, which was based on the Greek of Erasmus. As sources for his Old Testament translation Coverdale used the Penta-teuch of Tyndale, which was based on the Hebrew; also the Latin Bible, Luther's German Bible, and the Swiss German Bible. After bringing out his own version, Coverdale worked as an editor on the succeeding versions, for example, the one supposed to have been made by John Rogers, the literary executor of Tyndale and also a martyr. This was published under the name of the Matthew Bible in 1537. A second, also edited by Coverdale, called the Taverner Bible, appeared in 1539 and was a scholarly revision of the

Matthew Bible. These English versions came so fast in the sixteenth century that about all that can be done in this book is to name them; for in 1539, too, came the version called the Great or Cranmer's Bible, which became the authorized version for the English people until 1568. It was called the Great Bible because it was written in large folio form for use in the churches; and Cranmer's because this archbishop wrote its long preface. At bottom it is the Coverdale version, coming through the Matthew Bible.

There were two other versions, greater perhaps in their influence than the three last mentioned. The first one, the Genevan Bible, produced at Geneva and based on Tyndale, was made by Coverdale and other learned men. The New Testament appeared in 1557 and the Old in 1560. One edition of this Bible is known as the "Breeches Bible" because the verse "Adam and Eve made aprons" was translated "Adam and Eve made breeches." This Genevan Bible was more popular than the Great Bible as it was handier and cheaper. This popularity was increased by the fact that it was printed in Roman type, the chapters were divided into verses, and it also included a Bible dictionary and notes. Made in Geneva, the great influence was Calvinistic; therefore, it became the version favored by the Puritans and the Scotch Covenanters.

The bishops of the Church of England now determined to bring out a version. Theirs was based on the Great Bible and made by eight bishops of the Church, each being responsible for his own section.



It came out in 1568-1572, and was divided into three parts, each preceded respectively by a portrait of Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester, and Lord Burleigh. It was very large and costly, therefore short-lived, but it had the authority of the crown.

In some respects the Douay Bible was the most significant of the century, next to Tyndale's and that of Coverdale. In the latter part of the century, the Catholics were in turn persecuted in England and fled to the Continent, founding a university in Douay, Flanders, Jesuits and seminary priests being the teachers. The Catholics had no English version of the Bible and, in truth, wished none; but, because of the influence of the Protestant Bibles, they felt that they must have a translation and made the Douay version, an English version, made by English Roman Catholics for English Roman Catholics. It was based on the Latin Vulgate mainly, though other versions were consulted. As a whole, however, the Douay version is a translation of a translation. The New Testament was published in 1582 at Rheims and the Old Testament at Douay in 1609, just before the King James Version. It became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church and remains the basis of modern versions made as the time has demanded. Being translated from the Latin Vulgate, the Douay Bible included the apocryphal books among the canonical ones.

In this connection it is interesting to notice the status of the Apocrypha in the different versions. Coverdale included the books with the explanation that they were not equal in authority to the others;

the Matthew Bible also included them with the same explanation; the Great Bible placed them in the Old Testament with no explanation of their value; and the Genevan Bible omitted them after the first editions, giving them a place in the table of contents. Had Coverdale made his translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew, probably they would have been lacking in all versions except the Douay. Throughout the century we see Tyndale's influence, either direct or indirect, on all the versions.

Before taking up the King James or the Authorized Version, we quote what seems the best brief summary of the influence of Tyndale's work. "... while Tyndale's New Testament as a separate volume was virtually suppressed, his translation as republished by Rogers was licensed by the king and became the basis of the three authorized English Bibles—The Great Bible, The Bishops', and the King James."<sup>1</sup>

The culmination of all these English versions and the best known is the version which has been the English Bible of the Christian church for about three hundred years. But the question may be asked, when so much had already been done in that line, what was the need for a new translation? Perhaps the true answer may be found in the pithy statement often quoted: "King James was a born theologian and did not like the Genevan Bible because he hated the Puritans. Then the Bishops' Bible was obnoxious to the Puritans; the Genevan, to the King, and both were

<sup>1</sup> Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Making of the English New Testament*, p. 18.

criticized by scholars because of the imperfections and mistakes." There was at this time no thought of a new version, but it grew out of the discussion started by the request of the Puritans, not for a change in the Bible, but in the Prayer Book, a change which they thought would improve their church services. King James, very well versed in the Bible from his youth and knowing by experience the strict Presbyterianism of Scotland and hating it, was only too glad to grasp at the thought of a new version. This idea was particularly pleasing to him because he saw an opportunity to "pepper the Puritans" and at the same time to distinguish himself as the patron of a new translation.

(The texts used for the King James Version were the Bishops' Bible and three Hebrew Bibles, and most of the preceding English versions and their sources were consulted. This version was begun in 1604 and finished in 1611.) The work was done by representatives of the different sects; and by means of six companies—two of them meeting in Cambridge, two in Oxford, and two in Westminster. Their method was this: a certain portion was allotted to each company for revision, and then in the presence of all companies the translation was read and critically discussed and the text fixed by the agreement of the majority.

The value of the King James Version is incalculable. Its English is a model for all who wish English pure and undefiled; consequently it is one of the greatest literary monuments. It is the Bible older people love because by usage in prayer books and church services it has endeared itself to all; because it is a part of their

earliest vocabulary it seems like breaking away from friends and home to part with it. But after all, truth is better than sentiment, better even than the finest literary style. On the other hand, if we read the history of Bible versions we find strenuous objections made at first to them, even to the King James Version itself. In fact, had it not been for the troubled political conditions in England, another version would have quickly followed the King James, showing that it was not so satisfactory to all as it might be, though remarkable as a product of earlier seventeenth century knowledge. As proof of the dissatisfaction with the King James Version there were many private versions of the Bible, in whole or part, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and very noticeably in the nineteenth.

But after the King James Version there was no noted one made until the Revised Version, the New Testament coming out in 1880 and the Old Testament in 1884. It was natural to ask, what need of a new version since the Authorized or King James gives us a knowledge of the Bible, and is in itself a monument of good English and literary style? The mass of the people, too, were and perhaps are more than satisfied with it, so satisfied in fact that a great outcry was heard against a new version as if it were a sacrilege even to attempt it. But there are reasons why a new version was not only wise but necessary.

In the first place, where there are many versions of a book well done, the latest is always an improvement upon the others, just as Tyndale's text appeared in

1525 and was followed by other versions of the Bible which culminated in the Authorized. So men had worked upon the Authorized Version and others known to them, seeking a better text than any that had been given to the public yet. But there were other reasons why the Revised Version was not only desirable but a scientific necessity. First, much had been learned about the true text of the New and the Old Testament since the time of the King James Version. Of course, nothing produced so great a desire for a scientific revision of the Scriptures as the knowledge of the old manuscripts—the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus, for example. We might say that Tischendorf's discovery and translation of the Sinaiticus was the last impulse needed for a revision of even so great a version as the Authorized. Not only had the study of old manuscripts enlightened scholars, but the knowledge gained by discovery and exploration made the background clearer. Then there were other reasons as well. For instance, men had been working on these ancient languages for centuries and, consequently, a great advance had been made in the knowledge of these languages, particularly in that of the Greek and in the ability to tell the correct word even to a shade in the translation. Again, the science of textual criticism was developed by comparing old texts, by choosing from the mass of the best authorities what was thought to be *the* text of the Old or of the New Testament. In fact, the science of textual criticism both in regard to Bible text, even Shakespearean text, is a development of the last century, though carried



along through the preceding centuries. Again, the language of King James Version is antiquated and even in places misleading to modern readers. Words are like people, some are called Rip-van-Winkle words, going to sleep for a while and waking up perhaps with a different meaning; others are obsolescent words in modern English; still others are obsolete already, out of date as far as the original meaning is concerned. Besides this, many words had been incorrectly translated and give the reader a false impression; then, too, the artificial division into chapters and verses often destroys the continuity of the thought. The style, too, is a thing apart from ordinary life and tends to separate the Bible and religion from the workaday world. Hence, scholars desired to make the language of the Old and the New Testament conform to modern English in respect to the meaning and form of words. The result of all this was the Revised Version, out of which also grew the Standard American Revised. This movement had its origin in 1870 at the Southern Convocation in England, which voiced the need for a revision of the Authorized Version. The matter was taken up and companies formed in England who co-operated in their work with two American companies, the result being the Revised New Testament in 1880 and the Revised Old Testament in 1884.

The method of work was, for instance, to take a page of the Authorized Version, looking first at the text. After each had studied and made his notes on the text, they met together and discussed the matter, choosing from the revisions and comparisons what they



thought best represented the true text of the Bible. This revision was then sent over to America. It was treated in the same manner here, sent back with amendments and suggested criticisms to England, worked over again there, sent back to America for the fourth revision, and then to England for a fifth. In this manner these revisers arrived at the text, using all the late discoveries and the knowledge of the old manuscripts. The committee was formed of representative scholars from all denominations.

What the position of this Revised Version will be we have no means of knowing, but certainly it is a scholarly, scientific rendering of both the Old Testament and the New, based upon all the knowledge available of the old manuscripts and old languages as well as the facts brought to light by archeological research.

## CHAPTER XVI

### TWENTIETH-CENTURY VERSIONS: CONCLUSION

The activity shown in English Bible versions since the King James Bible culminated in the Revised Version and the American Standard Revised; but scholars are not yet satisfied with the English versions of the Bible, particularly that of the New Testament. Even the number of versions and revisions of the twentieth century is convincing proof of this. What is the source of this dissatisfaction and what are the principles suggesting a better version—one which would make a more universal appeal to the reader? The answer is to be found in the opinions of those producing new versions or revisions.

In the preface to the Modern Reader's Bible, Dr. Moulton states his belief that "The Bible is its own best interpreter." To be this he asserts that, aside from the translation, all the devices of modern printing should help the reader to an appreciation of Bible truth. In accordance with this principle, he produced the Modern Reader's Bible in 1895. The number of editions through which it has passed since then justifies his belief. Opening the book we see at once some things whose value even Bible students have not yet

fully sensed. For instance, poetry and prose are distinguished by the printed form; the wonderful songs incorporated into the Old Testament narrative stand out on the printed page, almost making the reader break forth into song. The book of Job shows by its printed form its poetic and dramatic original. Books printed so that their form suggests the meaning are the demand to-day. The oldest manuscripts could not help out the meaning by the form as our modern versions can. Why should not the Bible be given the benefit of such help? To quote Dr. Moulton:

. . . the ordinary versions of Scripture, however accurate may be the translation of the words, yet present a double divergence from the sacred original: first, that they give no indication of the varieties of literary form and structure that distinguish different parts of the Bible; secondly that they impress upon the whole another structure that does not belong to it, but was the creation of mediæval commentators. In the face of obstacles like these it is indeed difficult to apply the principle that the Bible should be its own interpreter.<sup>1</sup>

For example, many of the artificial divisions into chapters and verses, instead of helping to express the meaning, often hinder it, and frequently mislead, at least, by breaking the continuity of the thought. The editors of the Revised Version and the American Standard Revised attempted to correct this fault; but still much in that line is to be desired. One object,

<sup>1</sup> *The Modern Reader's Bible*, Preface, 1912.

then, in versions of to-day is to show the original form of the literature by the printed version. Important as this is, it is not the only object. In regard to the New Testament, principally, there is an absolute need for versions or revisions.

We have seen that the discovery and study of papyri during the last twenty years have revolutionized the study of the New Testament. We have found that the Greek in which the New Testament was written was not the classic Greek but the colloquial Greek of the common people—such Greek as Christ and the disciples knew and spoke. To quote Dr. Goodspeed:

The New Testament was written not in the classical Greek, nor in the Biblical Greek of the Greek Version of the Old Testament, nor even in the literary Greek of its own day but in the common language of everyday life. . . . It follows that the most appropriate English form for the New Testament is the simple, straightforward English of everyday expression.<sup>2</sup>

As the result of this discovery, Dr. Goodspeed published a modern-speech version of The New Testament in 1923. This translation is an American translation.

The version by Dr. James Moffatt, primarily made for a British public, illustrates his principle of procedure. The reasons given also apply to most American readers. This version of both the Old and the New Testament is an attempt to help readers interested in the Bible but not able to understand many words and

<sup>2</sup> *The New Testament*, Preface.

forms in the King James Version. Dr. Moffatt asserts that from correspondence with Englishmen in official positions in different countries he finds this class a large and widespread one. In accounting for the inadequacy of the great classic, the King James Version, for these people, he writes: "They do not possess the literary association of Elizabethan prose which enables us to prize that version as an English classic." To quote again:

Nevertheless, for the purpose of helping private readers, in the first instance, I considered that it was not useless to produce an idiomatic, modern rendering, which might convey . . . something of the innate sense and force of the original. Again there is an increasing number of people who are becoming aware that the meaning of the Old Testament is not always what the conventional English versions imply. . . . They want a version which incorporates as far as possible the results of research.

The opinions of these three men are based on the idea that the King James Bible is not readily understood by the majority of readers; therefore a Bible version, particularly that of the New Testament, must be based on the latest research work and knowledge and must employ all the devices of modern printing.

This summary shows the main forces at work in the twentieth-century versions which are so numerous both in England and in America. There is no time in this book even for the mention of more than a few. We call attention to the recent version of the New

Testament made by Mrs. Helen Barrett Montgomery, of Rochester, New York, an authority on the New Testament and a Bible scholar who has gained her knowledge in many of the old-world libraries; we recall the translation of Old Testament literature by Dr. J. M. Powis Smith, Professor of Old Testament Literature in the University of Chicago. There are many others not yet finished, like that in preparation by the Roman Catholics in London.

But the activity shown in versions of the Bible and modern-speech translations is not the only proof that the Bible is a force in twentieth-century life. Other phases of Bible history show the widespread interest in the Bible. From a report of the Bible Society for 1924-25 we find that the Bible has been translated, that is, versions have been made, into 770 languages and dialects, and that the whole Bible has been translated into 158 languages—the New Testament into 142, and portions of the Bible—a chapter, a verse, or a part—into 48 languages. Why is this significant? Some may say the heathen did not want the Bible. That is a mistake. Not all of these peoples, to be sure, have known enough about it to desire it, but many have earnestly asked for it, as can be proved by investigation. But even if they have not wished it, some people have evidently thought it wise to translate it at a great expense of time and money. The yearly expenditure for this purpose argues a demand for the Bible. This demand proves that Bible literature is a subject of vital importance. How vital is indicated in various lines. The Bible is one of the “best sellers”;



in fact at least four of the books exciting the most comment to-day center about the Bible. Our leading colleges and universities give its history and literature a place in their curricula. The present attempt to put its literature into the public schools is due to a realization of its value as literature and as a rule of conduct. The schools of religious education established in various cities emphasize its importance. The number and variety of the modern-speech translations of the Bible indicate its strong hold on the public. Another important movement is seen in the proposed change of method in presenting Bible literature, illustrated by the plan to classify its literature, to make, in other words, a Biblical literature for the grades. In 1924 a movement was started to edit what was to be called the "Children's Bible." The object was not to tamper with the matchless language of the Bible but to fit Bible literature to the age of the pupil. For instance, using the Bible as a text, for a child of five, the simple story of the wise men from the East, the flight into Egypt, and others suitable were planned. Material suited to the age was to be chosen for each grade. Pupils from twelve to seventeen were to read stories of religious history carefully chosen, and the whole Bible was not to be studied until young people reached the age of eighteen. Another point suggested is taking advantage of the wonderful literary models found in the Bible as an aid in composition work. The Bible is rich in the best models for any literary form, whether it be oration, argument, or short story.

In fact, there is no age to the Bible. It has always

been as now a source of inspiration, as witness the great paintings, music, and poetry which owe their origin to its truth. Blot out the pictures, the oratorios, the poems centering about it, and how much is left? Even the arts of fiction and the drama past and present are its debtors. Modern fiction especially is full of illustrations of novels based on the Bible. Even the "movies," as well as the legitimate drama, draw on the Bible as a source of great pictures, as illustrated by "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" and "The Ten Commandments." All these facts emphasize the necessity for knowing the Bible as literature in order that we may enjoy fully the representations, allusions, and quotations drawn from this source.

But enough has been written to show that the Bible is as great a force in the twentieth century as in the past and that we must know it well to take advantage of its power.

The aim of the present book has been to show that the growth of the Bible is like that of all great literature; and that to study it as literature, not as a creed or as a book on theology, is the way to understand thoroughly this Book of Books.

We have traced its growth from its far beginning in oral tradition on through the centuries to the crystallization of its written books into the canons of the Old and New Testaments. We have studied about the manuscripts, and noted their part in its preservation. We have followed its great versions from the Septuagint to the English King James Bible and the modern-speech translations. There are some things in this

growth that stand out preëminently. The influence of usage, translation, copying, interpretation, and the printed form has been very marked upon its history and growth. Further, corresponding to the life of the people, the growth has been slow, steady, natural, and sure. Nowhere has it been hurried and nowhere dependent on accident. The Bible has reached its present status as the Book of all Books just as slowly, surely, and naturally as the development seen in any of the processes of literature. Its growth has been inevitable. To use a Biblical expression, every stage of its growth has been reached in "the fullness of time," so that now it is the center of thought and life—not the life of the past but of modern life.

Its very survival from the beginning suggests this, yet it might survive and yet not be an expression of modern life. But it must be modern also, or why does it excite the interest and attention just mentioned? The subjects of interest to-day are indicated in our speech and writing, as witness the great inventions—the wireless, the radio, the aeroplane, the submarine. These, as we have seen, are of no greater interest to mankind than is the Bible. Nor is it hard to give reasons why this should be the case. The Bible is the center of modern scholarship. It has stood the test of the ages, of modern criticism, and of modern research. All critical study and archeological discoveries have testified to its truth. There is no age to truth; truth is truth in all ages. To be modern it must embody the thought and ideals of to-day, the test being the reactions of present life and aspirations

to its truth. Everywhere to-day modern life recognizes the Bible as the best rule of conduct and the best inspiration to true living, as well as a great storehouse of literary material of which no one can afford to be ignorant. The higher nature of man assents to its dictum, and it is the great spur to noble living to-day as in the past.

To be a great piece of literature, any book must have what we call literary style, and its content, as Matthew Arnold would say, must be a criticism on life. Further, the best literature is not only a criticism on life, but by this criticism inspires mankind to higher, nobler ideals. The Bible measures up to this final test also. Throughout the centuries its truth, not its theology, has been a constant source of inspiration to high and low. For this truth men have counted everything else dross, content, nay, glad, to give even life itself in exchange for it. Its truth to life, present and past, is the secret of its hold on all the ages and its preciousness to the twentieth century. Its history and its ideals make life worth living; they are a part of our unalterable inheritance, a promise of a glorious future, and a constant inspiration Godward.

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